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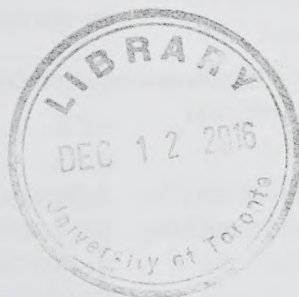
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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 8 December 2016

Jeudi 8 décembre 2016



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffier
Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 8 December 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 8 décembre 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING ONTARIO UP
FOR EVERYONE ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 VISANT À FAVORISER
L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO POUR TOUS
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / *Projet de loi 70, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, thank you very much for recognizing me to speak on this very important bill. But before I do that, today is the last day of the Legislature for the year, so I want to take this opportunity to wish you and all the members of this House a very merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, and the best of the holiday season. We work very closely together, and I know to the world outside, this may seem like a place where we are always sparring with each other. But I really want people to know that there are long-held friendships and relationships that exist in this Legislature. We are, at the end of the day, colleagues. We are, at the end of the day, fierce champions of our respective communities. We're here for one sole purpose, and that purpose is to build a better province for all our constituents. It's an honour to work with every single one of you. It has been an exciting and busy year, and I'm looking forward to next year. And I thank you, Speaker, for your service.

It has been a very busy year for me, personally, in my capacity as the Attorney General of the province—it is a great honour for me to have that role—and, of course, as the government House leader, and working with so many members in that capacity. Most importantly, Speaker—and coming to this bill, Bill 70—the job that I take most seriously is being the MPP for Ottawa Centre. My community has put their faith and trust in me as their representative for over nine years—I'm in my 10th year

of service—and it has been an honour to serve my community.

From the very first day when I sought the nomination back in 2007 and then was subsequently elected in the 2007, 2011 and 2014 elections, the reason I ran for public office in a downtown community like Ottawa is to make sure that we're building a vibrant, healthy and sustainable community.

The purpose for me running, personally, was that I wanted to make sure that downtown Ottawa, my community of Ottawa Centre, remained vibrant—that it is a community where people come to build their lives, young and old; where people come to raise their families; where people who are retired—or, as we call them, empty nesters—move back to downtown so that they can enjoy all the great amenities and the quality of life that downtown has to offer.

The reason for me running was that I did not want to see the hollowing of the downtown core. I did not want to see people fleeing to the suburban part of the city. They're great parts of the city to live in, but I wanted to make sure that from a public service perspective, all the right public services were there in my community in downtown Ottawa—in Ottawa Centre. That's the work that I have remained focused on, be it investments in our health care, investments in our schools or building public transit. Those are the kinds of things that our government has invested in again and again and again.

My community of Ottawa Centre has been a great beneficiary of it. If you look at the investments going on that this particular legislation speaks to and what our fall economic statement speaks to—for example, new investments in health care—I've got great institutions like the Ottawa heart institute and the Civic campus of the Ottawa Hospital. There's more to talk about there in the great, new 21st-century hospital we're going to build in downtown Ottawa, in the heart of the community that I represent; the Saint-Vincent, which provides care to people with complex needs; and many other such institutions.

If you just look at the heart institute right now, there is a \$200-million expansion that is taking place at the heart institute to provide world-class cardiac care to not only individuals who live in my community but the entire city of Ottawa and the entire eastern Ontario region.

Similarly, I'm really proud of the investments that we have made in education and in child care, another big focus of the fall economic statement and this bill. Just in my riding, the investments we have seen in rebuilding, revitalizing and refurbishing schools in the downtown core are enormous. We know that schools in the down-

town core tend to be older. Most of the schools in my riding are almost 100 years old now. A lot of them were built a while ago. They need TLC—tender, loving care—to make sure our children continue to receive a good education.

We have seen, for example, a brand new Broadview Public School built in Westboro in my riding. It has just brightened the whole community. You see the kids going to the school—it is remarkable. Similarly, last year we completed a new extension to Mutchmor Public School in the Glebe. It's an old school, 100 years old or so, and they built an addition to the school. The architecture flows so well. It's another great example of revitalizing a school and giving a whole new life to that school community.

Lastly, I will mention Devonshire, which celebrated 100 years a few years ago and has gone through an incredible refurbishment. The school has been kept the same, but inside it's just like a new life has been brought to school. In it, by the way, while they were doing the renovation, they found all these hidden gems like hidden fireplaces from 100 years ago, which were just covered up, and all kinds of things.

So many kids are so excited. Parents are delighted because it's giving them more reasons to live downtown. They know that they can get a good education and good schools for their children. The seniors who are moving back into the downtown core know that health care is available just down the street. We see that the small businesses in Wellington Village, on Elgin Street, in the Glebe, in Westboro, in Hintonburg, are just thriving. The BIAs tells me that the businesses are growing and they're excited, with more and more people moving back into the downtown core and making it so vibrant.

0910

Those are all things that are personally very exciting to me, because it's exactly why I chose to run: to make sure that our downtown core communities like Ottawa Centre are a vibrant place to live. The investment that we are making in building public transit in Ottawa with the LRT is remarkable. That is absolutely a game changer. We've got over 12 kilometres of LRT in phase 1 that is being built right now, with the support of the province to the tune of about \$600 million. Most of those 12 kilometres run through the downtown core from my riding, really creating the spine for the system that will—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I hear a point of order from the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have read Bill 70, and I didn't see anywhere where it talks about Ottawa downtown. So I was hoping that the member could speak to Bill 70.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All right. I've got to remind the member—he has been talking about daycare, so I'm going to just remind the member to focus on the entire bill. Thank you.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I find it very disheartening from the NDP and the member from Nickel Belt that they do not want me to talk about

my community. I'll say, with all due respect to the member opposite, that the reason I'm here is to talk about my community. I will not apologize for that, and I encourage you to do the same thing.

Speaker, I was talking about the downtown core and I was coming around to this bill talking about the modernization of the land transfer tax, how it's going to make housing more affordable in my community. So if you pay attention for a second, you will hear. But I shall not apologize for talking about my community.

Going back to public transit, because it is important and it ties to Bill 70 because it's a major investment that we are making in communities like mine to make sure that Ottawa Centre is a place to live. With the investment of \$600 million in phase 1 of LRT and then, most recently, we announced over a \$1-billion investment in phase 2 that will go east, west and further south, covering the rest of the city—in addition, building extensions up to Innes road in Ottawa—Orléans and going to the airport, again, to make sure that Ottawa is a vibrant place to live.

That, Speaker, leads me to a very important aspect of Bill 70, which is the changes that we are making to the land transfer act, where we are making it easy for first-time homebuyers, making it more affordable for first-time homebuyers to be able to purchase their home. Speaker, we know that one of the biggest investments that we make in our lives is when we buy a property, be it a house or a condominium. That is a huge, huge investment. I remember 10 or 12 years ago, Speaker, when I bought my first home, that I saved money for years and years to be able to do so. By creating a real incentive, by making sure that young families and individuals who don't own homes—to have an opportunity to buy a home is a very exciting part of this bill.

The change that we are making through Bill 70 is ensuring that first-time homebuyers get a refund of up to \$4,000. We're doubling that refund from \$2,000 to \$4,000, which is significant. That change means that the land transfer tax will not be payable on the first \$368,000 of the cost of your first home, which is roughly about the average cost of a home.

Again, coming back to my community of Ottawa Centre, where you've got an incredibly hot real estate market, we see that that kind of incentive, where first-time homebuyers will not be paying any land transfer tax up to about \$368,000, is a significant boost to my community, where we will see more and more people moving into the community and buying homes. With all the amenities, like the investment in the health care infrastructure we're making, like the investment in our school infrastructure we're making, like the investment we're making in our public transit, Speaker: All those things make it even more exciting for young families, for young people, for young professionals to come and live in the Glebe or Hintonburg or Carlington or Carleton Heights or Westboro or Mechanicsville or Champlain Park. All these great neighbourhoods are going to thrive from it.

Speaker, I thank you for the time. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to very briefly speak about the amazing things that are happening in my community,

Ottawa Centre. It's a great pride of mine to represent such a vibrant community. I'm very grateful to be part of a government that's making an investment that is going to help individuals who live in urban communities like mine by making investments in our child care, by making investments in our schools, by making investments in our health care, by making investments in our public transit and, most importantly, making it affordable for people to buy their first home.

Speaker, I look forward to hearing from other members, and I hope they, too, talk about the great things this are happening in their communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm actually not pleased to speak on Bill 70. It just seems to be a pattern with this government—shameful conduct, I would say—that we continue to ram bills through committee and we ignore a very serious concern raised by those affected—in this case, those affected by Bill 70. This is what this government has done to Ontario's small and independent craft distillers. This is a prime example of how this government operates.

The Ontario Craft Distillers Association spent more than two years—two years—negotiating towards a graduated tax on spirits sold at their locations. This same tax policy has allowed Ontario's craft breweries to become some of the most successful in the world. So we did it with craft breweries, and this is what the craft distillers wanted to have.

This was my approach when my former colleague the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook had tabled his Free My Rye bill, Tim Hudak. I picked it up after he left the House and my friend here, Mr. Oosterhoff, was elected. So I want to talk, Speaker, just very briefly about Free My Rye and what it does and what, actually, the Ontario Craft Distillers Association thought the government was going to put forward.

Under my bill, the markup on the sale price of spirits a manufacturer produces and sells in a year at a store on site would not exceed 10% for the first 50,000 litres, 20% for 50,000 up to 100,000 litres, and 40% for any part in excess of 100,000 litres, to a maximum of 625,000 litres. So that was the recipe for success that I think small craft distillers were looking for, but instead, out of the blue, this finance minister comes down with Bill 70 and pours those two years' worth of talks down the drain. For comparison purposes, the rate that's proposed is a 61.5% flat tax on spirits. It's 10 times the rate that a winery is charged for on-site sales.

So needless to say, Speaker, when Bill 70 was tabled, after these two years of negotiations were poured down the drain, they were furious. They explained how this regressive tax that the government is proposing would force some or all of those existing 16 small independent distilleries out of business. But, you know, this finance minister, he wasn't having anything of it. He and some of his members accused these small distillers of making this all up. He basically said, as the finance minister, that they should just drink up and take the medicine.

So I wanted to just take this opportunity to applaud Charles Benoit, who is the head of the Ontario Craft Distillers Association, which also includes a brand new distillery in my riding of Leeds—Grenville, the King's Lock Craft Distillery in Johnstown, Ontario. They made an incredibly strong case for taking this distillery tax out of Bill 70 and restarting negotiations on a graduated tax. It would have allowed our craft distillers producing world-class grain-to-glass spirits to experience the same growth we've seen in our craft brewing, in our winery and in our cidery sectors.

I know the Minister of Children and Youth Services wants me to give a shout-out to Bruce Davis and the Gananoque Brewing Co., so I'll do that, sir. I'll do that just for you, sir.

But that makes my point. The policies that this government put in place to grow the craft beer industry, to grow small wineries across the province, ones that all members celebrate—we're not taking the same approach when it comes to those small craft distilleries.

0920

We had a great opportunity, from an economic development standpoint, to grow this industry. Other provinces do it. The model that has been talked about in this House on numerous occasions was the British Columbia model, which allowed their small distillers to grow and flourish.

Charles Benoit talked about his disappointment in a press conference we held here at Queen's Park together on Tuesday. As Charles stated, "Our association first met with the ministry in August, 2013. For three years, we were led to believe that the government heard us on the importance of a graduated tax. Bill 70 proves otherwise, and guarantees that Ontario misses out on the craft distilling renaissance happening throughout the rest of North America."

So we tabled an amendment, Speaker. The government used their majority, as they do to vote down any good idea that's at the House. We wanted to allow distillers to sell up to 1,250 litres of spirits tax-free in the store that they own and operate. We thought that was a reasonable compromise. Again, the guillotine of this government came down, cut down any reasonable amendments, stopped debate. Using the words that the member for St. Catharines said many, many times when he was in opposition, the government "choked off" debate and time-allocated this bill.

Again, with craft distilleries, we're missing a great opportunity, Speaker. I wanted to pitch this to them again. Please, I want some indication from this government that you're recognizing what we are doing to this industry. Why can't we sit down and talk about a graduated tax? They stood at the table in good faith. They thought they were bargaining in good faith with this government. Again, this government led them down the garden path and poured all of those wonderful talks down the drain with Bill 70. It's a terrible deal for distillers, the schedule is awful, and I wanted to make sure that I stood up for those people today.

Thanks for giving me that opportunity, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Waterloo.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Waterloo. My apology.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Waterloo. That's where I'm from. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Of course, the story of Bill 70 is such an interesting story, is it not? We have never seen a piece of legislation move so quickly. It was rushed for a number of reasons, I believe.

The 5,000 people who appeared on the front lawn of Queen's Park in protest specifically to schedules 16 and 17 contained in Bill 70—Bill 70, of course, is called Building Ontario Up for Everyone. The government remembered the “for everyone” part after they prorogued, so we're happy about that. If we're in the Christmas spirit and we're trying to be generous, I'm really happy that the government remembered the “for everyone” part of this bill.

However, Madam Speaker, the schedules speak a different story, schedule 1 in particular, with regard to the new tax on craft distillers.

If you had asked me if I would be talking in defence of the 16 craft distillers almost on a consistent basis for the last two weeks, two weeks ago I would have said, “I don't think so.” Because we were also led to believe that the government had been working collaboratively—you know, this new culture of openness and transparency. Their fourth pillar of the government is to build up the economy and build businesses up.

But schedule 1 does exactly the opposite of this, Madam Speaker. Because we have these boutique wine and beer now in grocery stores, the government has increased the tax for those operators, because they no longer have a stand-alone operation. That was made clear during our review at finance. But what it does, actually, for craft distillers is quite the opposite.

We'll hear the bafflegab, if you will, from the government side of the House on this, but I want to make it very clear: We believe the craft distillers on this one. In fact, Charles Benoit of the Ontario Craft Distillers has actually opened their books, and they have told us the true financial impact of a tax of 61.5% of the retail price, plus a 28-cent to 38-cent per-litre volume tax and an 8.93-cent environment tax for each non-refillable container. He has been very clear about the impact that this change will have on their business. When he did come to Queen's Park and he participated in the press conference, he said that on a good day, this will probably save them \$1.80 per bottle.

That is the change that the government has made. That's the extent of the investment that this government is willing to put forward to craft distillers, who are local entrepreneurs, who take some pride in their craft, who have very strong partnerships with their local farmers and the agricultural sector and who are committed to their local communities and to supporting those local food movements, local agriculture movements, and took this government at face value for three years.

I have to correct my record. I thought it was two years, but actually when we review back the entire process, the Ed Clark process that the Premier has embraced, it's almost a three-year investment of time, energy and time away from their business. They also had to sign a non-disclosure statement with the Premier's advisory council to not speak to their MPPs. It must be a breach of some privilege somewhere to have a citizen in the province of Ontario and prohibit them from speaking to their duly elected MPPs. For us it was quite alarming and definitely a red flag, a red Liberal flag.

So what do we have here in the province of Ontario now? We have 16 craft distillers who are incredibly disappointed in this government, 16 small businesses who are not going to give up, and neither are we. We did try to make Bill 70 a better bill for them at committee by bringing forward an amendment to have them exempt for the first 5,000 litres—5,000 litres. The government used their majority to vote us down. We supported the PC amendment of 1,250 litres, a tax exemption.

This is the idea of graduated taxation, to give these businesses an opportunity to be successful. But the government is willing to let those same craft distillers give away 1,250 litres of promotional—this is something that the finance minister likes to brag about—but they will not let them sell that product tax-free. Well, how generous of the Liberal government to let them give away their product, but will not let them sell it and be tax-free.

That is the walking contradiction of this government, who says they believe in small businesses; that they believe and understand that the small and medium-sized businesses in the province of Ontario are the true job creators. Yet, when they had an opportunity to engage an emerging field, an emerging sector, they decided to not apply the graduated tax model, which has been so successful in the province of Ontario.

The craft beer industry in Ontario has proven to be very successful, as has the local wine movement as well. The BC model allows for a 50,000-litre exemption. That's how that government is demonstrating to an emerging craft movement, from a distiller's perspective—that's how they are supporting those businesses. It has proven to be so successful. The grain farmers in BC and the fruit producers in BC have an amazing collaborative relationship with those distillers, because we grow good things in Ontario and we want to put those products into a place where they can create jobs, they can improve communities and where people who are invested in becoming a craft distiller can realize their dreams.

I think it was genuinely a surprise. I think that the government thought that they were doing the craft distillers a huge favour by giving them a small break at the LCBO level, but the movement is in the distilleries. I toured one in Ayr, Ontario, last Friday. I was so impressed with these young entrepreneurs. They were so committed to quality, so committed and so proud of the fact that they're following their dream. They were out in Ayr on a farm. They had totally refurbished this barn. They use the mash after they make the vodka or the rye—they're still deciding what they're going to be

making—and they can actually put it on the field. It's full circle. Environmentally friendly geothermal solar panels—they are so far ahead of this government it was a little bit embarrassing for me to be there because the Liberal government is actively working against these young bright people of the province of Ontario who want to be part of this growing economy, who want to be part of the solution.

0930

What does this government do? They rush Bill 70 through this House in the last two and a half weeks. The reason I mention the speed of the bill is because I will say, in this House, that democracy was undermined by this process. The legislative process where a bill would move through this place with due democratic participation—this government failed on this mark. The reason that they did fail is that they time-allocated the debate. I had one hour. I think only two of our members got to speak to this bill at second reading.

We tried to pull schedules 16 and 17 from this bill because this is a finance bill that has nothing to do with downtown Ottawa.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No apology needed; just speak to the bill, please—to the Attorney General.

Schedules 16 and 17 have no business in this finance bill. They have no business in there. Undermining worker safety in the province of Ontario and hurting small and medium-sized businesses in the province of Ontario—right now Bill 70 is a perfect example. It is a perfect vehicle for how our government is so disconnected with the people of this province.

I quoted that 2,000 skilled trade workers were on the front lawn; legislative security did let me know that it was closer to 5,000. They weren't here because they felt that the process was so consultative. They weren't here because they're so supportive of this government. They weren't here because they feel so supported by this government. They were here fighting for good jobs and fighting for worker safety. That's what they were here for. They had to come to the front lawn because they were not consulted in the crafting of this legislation.

The government will say that there were two substantive reports that came forward which informed schedules 16 and 17, and I will contend, as I did in the two hours that we had for clause-by-clause—in the two hours that we had for clause-by-clause—that in those reports, the Dean report included, one of the number one recommendations is that if you are changing legislation as it relates to worker safety and the Labour Relations Act, then you must have the employer and the employees at the table while you do so. That is how you craft progressive, meaningful legislation. You don't do it after the fact, and this government tried to do it after the fact.

The reason I have evidence that this government just rushed this piece of legislation through is that they had to amend their own legislation: Ten amendments at committee—10 amendments on schedule 17 really just sort of tinkering around the edges, nothing really substantive.

There's also a get-out-of-jail-free clause at the end saying that the minister can pretty much override.

It's hard. It's hard right now on this last day of this Legislature because some of us are tired—full disclosure—as we leave this place and as we have tried to work with this government in a collaborative effort. We brought amendments to Bill 70 which were informed by the voices of the people that we represent because that's the way it's supposed to work. We're not here for ourselves; we are here for the people who elected us. It's a huge responsibility.

As I mentioned in committee on worker safety, I will always bring up one person's name in my riding because, for me, worker safety is incredibly personal. It's incredibly personal because we have children who are entering the skilled trades. My own son is starting his apprenticeship to be an electrician. I'm incredibly proud of him. But when you undermine a process that is meant to keep workers safe and meant to hold employers to account for their practices and their policies as employers, you need to ensure that workplace inspections are a part of that equation.

When I was first elected in Kitchener–Waterloo, there was a young man named Nick Lalonde, 23 years old, who was working on the 11th storey of a building—Waterloo is definitely growing up—and he fell to his death. He had a child, and he had a family that loved him. But what he didn't have was working-at-heights training. There was no workplace health and safety policy in place, and the ministry had not been monitoring this particular contractor to ensure that those practices that the government talks about were actually in place.

I drive by that building every single day and I think of this young man. I think of the lost potential of workers who lose their lives when they go to work in the province of Ontario. I have to tell you that this province can do a much better job on that.

If we thought schedules 16 and 17 would improve worker safety in the province of Ontario, then we would be supportive of them. But unfortunately, schedule 16 amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to allow the Chief Prevention Officer to accredit a health and safety management system according to the standards set out by the CPO. This gives the Chief Prevention Officer of the province of Ontario the ability, or the powers, to recognize an employer if they are a certified user of an accredited health and safety management system that meets some of the standards set by the CPO.

When we met with finance staff—and I have to tell you that the public servants who serve this Legislature are very amazing people, and I think they care deeply about their work. But when we had asked them about the consultation that they did on the schedule, they made it very clear that they consulted within their own department, with their own client. Again, that speaks to a flawed process, and that's why you have a piece of legislation that New Democrats cannot support, Madam Chair.

It was also very concerning that the ministry, on the same day, put out a memo saying that this legislation will

reduce the burden of workplace inspections—the burden. What we know in the province of Ontario, and actually in other jurisdictions, is that these health and safety management systems are not the be-all and end-all that the government would like them to be. There are weaknesses in this model, for sure, and the evidence speaks to that. But when the government or the ministry considers—this memo came from the Ministry of Labour—that the burden of a workplace inspection—just even that language is disconcerting for us, because there's a direct correlation between workplace safety and the accountability that employers are held to, and the level of those inspections on a workplace site.

When you hold the employer to account for having safety as a priority in the workplace, then workers are safer. When workers are trained appropriately and go through an apprenticeship program which actually is very meaningful and based on quality, when they are trained in that manner, they are safer. Workplaces are safer. When they are not, this compromises the safety of the entire workplace, or a work site in this instance. So that is a challenge.

Bill 70 is really a disparate level of schedules that have come together, but schedule 1, schedule 16 and schedule 17 definitely are sort of buried in there. For us, they are incredibly concerning.

I didn't even have a chance to deliver petitions on Bill 70. That's how fast Bill 70 went through. I do have some, from skilled tradespeople across the province who are incredibly concerned about the way that this legislation moved forward. Who was driving this legislation, I think, is of concern as well.

This is from Melissa McGlashan. She says that Bill 70 will allow labourers to perform skilled tasks that presently require a licensed tradesperson. That's the heart of the concern. She goes on to say that this is another example of governments regulating only in the interests of investors, rather than the workers of this province.

0940

I have so many of these testimonials from the people who are building Ontario up. This is what this government needs to understand. You will not build Ontario up without trained, qualified, competent, skilled trades workers. You will not.

We have, really, so many issues with Bill 70. The people who came to committee—we voted on Bill 70 at noon and we took delegations at 1 o'clock. This has never happened. The list of delegations was handwritten by the Clerk—never happened. One person who came—Charles Benoit from the Ontario craft distillers—I asked him, “How much time did you have to appear before committee?” He said, “Seventy-eight minutes.”

When you undermine the democratic process—this is a shared responsibility that we all have, to ensure that legislation serves the people, not special interests; to ensure that people are brought into this place. This is the people's House. We are here for the people of Ontario. When a government so actively works against that principled approach to this democratic institution, it leaves us all with questions about the purpose and the goals and the

intention of a government, because what Bill 70 does not do is build Ontario up for everyone. In fact, it leaves a huge swath of our population out of the equation.

This is my last appeal: that the finance minister would consider pulling schedule 16 and 17 from Bill 70 and give the Ontario craft distillers a graduated tax scheme so they can actually survive in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Nepean—Carleton for a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just a few minutes ago, it was announced that the first Canadian female will be on a banknote in Canada. I'm sitting here incredibly moved because I grew up in a small town called New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, which actually became the reason that this individual—Viola Desmond, a civil rights leader, a trailblazer, a strong woman—will be the first Canadian. As a New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, native, and as a female, I'm incredibly proud here today, and I wanted that noted in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you for that information.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm very proud to be standing in this House today for the third reading of Bill 70, the Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act (Budget Measures), 2016. The fall bill reflects the choices our government has made to help people in their everyday lives, creating jobs and growing the economy, all the while remaining committed to balancing the budget next year and remaining balanced the year after. Bill 70 is part of our plan to build Ontario up for everyone. We're making housing more affordable, we're strengthening consumer protection and we're supporting growth across the province.

Our plan is working. Over the past two years, our economy has grown 5.3%. Last year, our economic growth was double the national average. In fact, for the first half of this year, Ontario's growth was faster than Canada, the US and almost all other G7 countries. In fact, the commerce board of Canada today has just announced that Ontario is at lead with BC for that growth.

Since the 2008 global recession, 660,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario. The majority of these jobs are full-time in the private sector and at above-average wages. These are good jobs—jobs that Ontarians can rely on. In fact, Ontario's unemployment rate today is at an eight-year low. As I reaffirmed in the 2016 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, we will continue to make strategic choices to grow our economy, to attract more jobs, to encourage businesses to grow and scale up and to make life easier for everyone across the province.

We often hear from people that they're concerned about not being able to afford their first home. It's difficult for many to get up on that first rung of the property ladder. Bill 70 proposes that as of January 1, 2017, the maximum refund of land transfer tax, the LTT, is doubled for eligible first-time homebuyers to \$4,000. With the increased maximum, no LTT would actually be payable by those qualifying purchasers on the first \$368,000 of the cost of their first home. In fact, with the

doubled refund, more than half of first-time homebuyers in Ontario would pay no LTT on the purchase of their first home.

While we're supporting first-time homebuyers, we're also protecting renters. The government is taking action by freezing the property tax on apartment buildings while reviewing how the high property tax burden on these buildings affects rental market affordability. The average municipal property tax burden on apartment buildings is more than double that for other residential properties, such as condominiums.

Increases in rents and home prices have made housing affordability a concern for a growing number of people trying to enter the market.

At the same time, we're also modernizing the LTT, given that rates have not changed since 1989. In fact, the residential properties that we're speaking of would see a marginal increase by 0.5% on the portion of the purchase above \$2 million, and the rate on commercial, industrial and agricultural properties would also go up to 2% from 1.5% on the portion of those purchases above \$400,000. This would help fund the enhancements to the first-time homebuyers refund.

We're also doing our part to strengthen consumer protection. We propose to extend Ontario Securities Commission whistleblower protections to employees who provide information about the possible contraventions of Ontario commodity futures law.

We would also establish the initial parameters for the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario, otherwise known as FSRA. This would be a new, independent and flexible regulator of financial services and pensions. The establishment of FSRA represents an important first step towards modernizing and strengthening the regulation of financial services and pensions in Ontario.

FSRA would be more consumer-focused and improve protections for investors and pension plan beneficiaries. We're also amending the Pension Benefits Act to clarify the entitlements to portability of pension benefits and give the Superintendent of Financial Services within FSCO the authority to impose the appropriate measures in the pensions sector to improve enforcement of the Pension Benefits Act.

This bill also includes amendments designed to support economic growth across the province. As the opposition has highlighted, Bill 70 does include changes that would amend the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act of 1996. In less than five years, the number of distillers in our communities has grown more than tenfold. There is strong evidence that there is a bright and promising future for craft spirits here in Ontario. We want distillers to attract new customers, grow their businesses and thrive in their communities. As it stands right now, revenue for those distillers, say, from a \$39 bottle of the spirits sold at their on-site store is only 39%. With our changes, the distillers would have an increase in their revenue to about 45%. We've also included tax exemptions for promotional distribution of up to 1,250 litres of spirits. Both of these changes would

bring distillers closer in line with the way breweries and wineries operate with regard to on-site sales and promotional allowances. These proposed changes are designed to improve the bottom line of small distillers and help them invest, hire, grow and thrive in their communities.

We're supporting small business. We know that's important for all of us.

The building up our Ontario plan also supports the implementation of our fiscal plan. We are balancing the books this year and next. We're borrowing less than we've ever had in the past. Our interest on debt as a percentage of revenue in this province is now the lowest in 25 years. We're taking advantage of ensuring that we stimulate growth by investing in things that matter to the people of Ontario without sacrificing those programs and services that matter to them. We'll continue to do our part to ensure Ontario grows and that our economy grows. We're taking steps to improve the College of Trades, as also mentioned by the members opposite, recognizing that everyone needs to be at their best. Taking advantage and recommendations from Tony Dean and, since then, Chris Bentley, we're enacting those measures to provide greater protections for consumers, the public, as well as workers.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, I rise to speak on this Bill 70—one of the few times anybody in this Legislature actually gets to speak on this bill. It was rushed from beginning to end. It fell out of—well, it was supposed to fall out of the fall economic statement, which was only, by the way, the middle of November. And here we are, in the first week of December, and the bill is about to pass today, if the government has their way. It's a matter of hours, Speaker, that we've had across the entire province to talk about this bill, not days or weeks. It could be calculated in minutes, to be quite frank.

0950

Instead of the fall economic statement, where we should be talking about the dire financial straits that the province is in thanks to the government, we should be talking about the massive debt, our deficit. The Financial Accountability Officer tells us we are going to have 13 consecutive years of deficits in the province of Ontario. That's staggering, that we can be the largest subnational debtor on the planet and still be accumulating deficits.

Now, I know the government says they're going to balance by 2017-18, but I have to tell you, the Financial Accountability Officer came out with not one, not two, but three documents in about a three-week period that say, "No, that's not what's going to happen." He came out with his outlook, his medium-range outlook, and said, "They're not going to balance by 2017-18. In fact, they're going to have a \$2.6-billion deficit at that time"—\$5.2 billion this year, a \$2.6-billion deficit on the year that the government says they're going to balance, and increasing to \$3.7 billion. According to our independent Financial Accountability Officer, our deficit is scheduled to continue to rise, not reduce, Speaker.

But we don't find any of that here in this bill. What we do find instead is tinkering with the Municipal Act. In the fall economic statement bill—Bill 70—we've got the Municipal Act, which is, first of all, unusual in itself, that we're dealing with the Municipal Act in a finance bill. But what's even more unusual is that—this is Bill 70—we're also dealing with Bill 68 simultaneously, and Bill 68 is all about the Municipal Act. It deals entirely with the changes to the Municipal Act.

It just tells us that this government is scrambling to make some semblance that they're in control and in charge, but oops, they're not. They've got a chunk of the Municipal Act that we're dealing with in Bill 70 that didn't make it into Bill 68. With this speed come mistakes.

Speaker, here we are, one day earlier at 11:45 in the morning, we have a vote. The vote passes to send us to our finance committee, which, incidentally, is meeting this very second downstairs on yet another issue. To have the same finance people that—the third party's finance critic and me having to be here, when we're supposed to be downstairs also, just tells you they're fumbling and bumbling over trying to ram all these things through at the same time with the same people. It should never happen. We've got rules to make that not happen, Speaker, but the rules are all thrown out this week and last week as we fumble and bumble through these bills.

So at 11:45 in the morning, the bill passes. You have until 1 o'clock to book a deputation with our committee, which is also seized with wiping everything else we've done out and go and meet with these deputants. But we already had other pre-budget consultations scheduled for that day. It's amazing, Speaker, that we're meeting on this with this speed. Here are these people at 11:45 in the morning. They get notice: 1 o'clock; book it.

As the third party finance critic mentioned, the agenda was handwritten. I've never seen that either. That's quite amazing. A scribbled-out, handwritten agenda in a legislative committee that's meeting was quite novel to see, I must say. It was a keeper, Speaker. Now we've got people who came to present as best they could, considering they had an hour's notice.

Again, they're rushing this through. It was so bad that the government brought 10 amendments to their own bill—mistakes they made along the way, and things they needed to fix. It's that rushed. It's this rush that is probably the most upsetting.

I know that other members here wanted to speak on these 27 acts. They're amending 27 different laws. Again, many of them have nothing to do with finance. They're rammed in here. They're creating four new laws.

In fact, the most interesting part—you heard the Premier say only three weeks ago, when this bill was introduced, Bill 70, that there are no new taxes. No new taxes. But as you start to read through this, as you heard my colleague from Leeds–Grenville and the third party finance critic mention, there's a 61.5% increase in sales tax on Ontario's craft spirits distillers, who came to the committee and told us that if and when this bill passes,

they will cease operation. They will close their businesses down. They were promised things by the government, who, in their opinion, led them along. They stuck it out as long as they could, waiting for this big change to come. The change that came, sadly, is going to put them out of business. They told the committee. Those are their words. They are going to close their businesses. That in itself is disappointing. It's very sad news for employees throughout Ontario in the craft distiller business. It defies what the Premier said. She said “no new taxes,” and this is a 61.5% sales tax increase.

That slouches in comparison to the \$105 million in new taxes that are being imposed on Ontario's families and seniors in this bill—\$105 million in new taxes. The Premier said “no new taxes,” but her bill that I presume she's going to vote for in a couple of hours from now will be in favour of a \$105-million tax increase.

There used to be a 1.5% tax rate on houses over \$250,000, but now it's going to be 2% on the amount of the value of the properties that exceed \$400,000. That scoops up a big chunk of money for this government.

So while the Premier says “no new taxes,” we've got the distillers charged taxes, and we've got \$105 million in taxes on families and seniors on the sale of their homes.

We brought some amendments. I mentioned that the government themselves brought 10 amendments to clean up the mess that they scrambled together in this bill that they put together quickly. We've asked them to remove that \$105-million tax that's being added. They said no. They voted down our amendment. The Liberal government voted down our amendment that would save families \$105 million starting January 1. That's gone. Get ready to write the cheques. More money for this government. To think about their waste, their mismanagement, and their scandals—they've got another \$105 million thrown in the pot starting January 1 to add to that mess.

1000

We asked them to remove amendments, Madam Speaker. We asked them to remove the amendments where the minister is allowed to collect and use certain information. We asked them, and this is on land transfer again: “What are you going to do with that?” We asked them that in our briefing, and they couldn't tell us what they're going to do with this information. But they want it. You would think that they would know in advance, or at least be able to tell us in advance, what they're going to do with that if it was something that was important to the people of Ontario. But that's gone.

When we go to the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act—this is the one that my colleague from Leeds–Grenville has championed so well; Steve Clark has championed this unbelievably well, fighting for the craft distillers. We brought an amendment and, sadly, again, it got turned down by this government. It would have altered this 1,250-litre tax-free exemption to be applied to spirits that are sold, instead of those distributed free of charge.

The government will boast, “Oh, we're going to allow them to distribute these free of charge.” The amount that

they're talking about for other distillers would be literally something they'd spill in a month. This is more than some of these craft distillers even make in a year. So their competitors will be able to dole that much out as samples, without charge, where these guys will be put out of business because of that. We brought an amendment, a very thoughtful amendment. It got turned down by the Liberal government. It's gone, as will those companies be gone in a month from now, Speaker. That's the saddest part of this.

We've asked for sections that impose a phased increase to the basic tax rate on wine and wine coolers purchased from boutiques and wine stores. That got thrown out. Everything we brought—all the productive and thoughtful ideas that we could garner from those quick deputations that we had from the people and the companies and the associations that had great ideas, we put into thoughtful amendments—gone. They didn't want to hear anything, Speaker. Bang the gavel, get us out of the way, ram this thing through as fast as possible. I've just never seen anything like that. From the time a bill is written to the time it's passed, it goes through like that.

It has nothing to do, in many cases, with finance. We don't talk about finance. We don't talk about our debt and our deficit. We don't talk about the dire financial straits. No, we're going to fix something in the Municipal Act in this bill. We're going to fix things that have nothing to do with the finances of Ontario, and it's all because they're ramming and cramming.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Further debate?

Okay. Pursuant to the orders of the House dated November 30, 2016, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Naqvi has moving third reading of Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a yes.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it. We'll have a recorded vote following question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Naqvi has moved unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Agreed. I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and that the questions on the

motions for second and third reading of the bills be put immediately without debate: Pr54 and Pr55.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the orders of the—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, dispense. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

COMPUTERS MEAN BUSINESS INC. ACT, 2016

Mr. Dong moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr54, An Act to revive Computers Mean Business Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

COMPUTERS MEAN BUSINESS INC. ACT, 2016

Mr. Dong moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr54, An Act to revive Computers Mean Business Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

RANGER SURVEY SYSTEMS CANADA INC. ACT, 2016

Mr. Vanthof moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr55, An Act to revive Ranger Survey Systems Canada Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

RANGER SURVEY SYSTEMS CANADA INC. ACT, 2016

Mr. Vanthof moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr55, An Act to revive Ranger Survey Systems Canada Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day? Nothing? No further business. We will recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1007 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to have Sarah and Lou Nirta from the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, from the town of Parkhill, at Queen's Park today. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have many grandparents who will be joining us here in the gallery today: Frank Cianciullo, Sonya Cianciullo, Lea Campbell, Archie Campbell, Betty Cornelius, Tami Downes, Matthew Frizell, Wanda Davies, Giovanna Valenti, Fay Brugger, Paul Brugger, Audrey Meikle, Alex Meikle, Joel Jacobson and Suzanne Jacobson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I would like to introduce four excellent young people who have joined us today in the members' gallery. They're members of the Ontario Students Trustees' Association: the president, Kayvon Mihan; the public board council president, Dasha Metropolitansky; the Catholic board council president, Nicolas Bottger; and Aidan Harold, who is a policy officer with the student trustees' association. Speaker, please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have two very special guests visiting Queen's Park today for the first time: my next-door neighbour from Blue Heron Pond in Windsor, Nora Rehner, is here, along with her three-year-old granddaughter, Michaela, who lives in the riding of St. Paul's here in Toronto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I too have people visiting for the first time at Queen's Park: first, from my constituency office in Pickering-Scarborough East, Michelle Viney and Dave Johnson in the upper gallery. I also have Laura Vaillancourt. She is the executive director of the Ontario Philharmonic, located in Durham region.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming the former mayor of Mississauga, the icon from Mississauga, Hazel McCallion.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: On behalf of my colleague the MPP for Niagara Falls, I would like to welcome family members of page Jackson Louws: his sister, Megan; his cousin, Erica George; and Jackson's aunt's sister, Charmaine Reid. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my privilege to welcome a very special guest, the former mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion. She is in the east members' gallery. I also extend a warm welcome to her guests: Erika and Peter McCallion, Diane Kalenchuk, Fran Rider, Pat Nichols, Jim Murray, Douglas Fowles, Ron Duquette, Amy Tjen, Kay Umamera, Najah Saad, Haroon Khan and Thomas Wellner. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you for joining us.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome Stefan Suvajac, who is a student trustee with the Thames Valley District School Board and here with Ontario Student Trustees' Association.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Il me fait plaisir de souligner la présence de deux personnes très importantes pour moi : Anick Tremblay et Nathalie Montpetit, qui

travaillent dans mon bureau de circonscription. Je les remercie d'être ici.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to acknowledge all of the members of our constituency offices, our staff, who are here. I know that we're joined by many of them today, and I want to welcome them to Queen's Park and thank them for all that they do.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today, I would like to welcome the wonderful and very capable staff from my constituency office in Barrie, Ashleigh Latham and Pamela Nicholson, and retired Lieutenant Colonel Sue Wigg.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome the parents of page Emma-Rose, Sarah and Chris Hoog, and sister Lavinia Hoog. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I would also like to welcome Kaitlin Jingco and Alanna Myers, two wonderful constituency staff of mine. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: No words can express my gratitude for the hard work that my staff does in our community office in Ottawa Centre. I want to welcome Terri-Lynne Robinson, Jessica Dawson, Lydia Klemensowicz and Jayson Pham, who is our intern in the office. I want a big shout-out to Mai Habib, who is holding the fort at the office in Ottawa Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Han Dong: I would also like to welcome my constituency staff, Roy Zhang and Sarah Haque. They're joining us in the public gallery today. Welcome.

Hon. Charles Sousa: As noted, we're going to be honouring an outstanding individual here today. Before us, we have the loyal friends of Hurricane Hazel up in the galleries. We welcome the good people of Mississauga to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to welcome Fadi El Masry from my constituency office in Ottawa. I'd also like to welcome Elise Roiron, who is my executive assistant here at Queen's Park. She'll be leaving me in the new year after five years, and I just want to thank her for all of her work.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I just want to wish MPP Baker a happy birthday today. Happy birthday.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome to the gallery today Heather Morrison, who is the chair of the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington children's aid society.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It is my pleasure to welcome the leadership of our student trustees here from MSAC, who I understand met with PA Anderson this morning. Welcome, all of you.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased and proud to welcome members of my team to Queen's Park. Here today in the east gallery are my new staff members Lawvin Hadisi and James Maclean. Also here in the public gallery from my const office are Meghan Sinclair, Sam Lash, Nicole Mills, Gillian Rowatt and Ali Baig. Welcome to Queen's Park, everyone.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to welcome to the chamber my hard-working constituency staff. Up above, we have Charlotte Rouse and Catherine Dos Santos, and here in the east members' gallery, Anne Wood. They work hard every day in Etobicoke Centre. I'd like to thank you for coming today.

I'd also like to welcome two dear friends, Becky Coles and her mother, Ann. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to certainly welcome my constituency staff from Peterborough: Andrew Bolton, Wat Lajoie and Matt Stoeckle. Charlene McClintock is at home doing it. It's always interesting for some folks in Peterborough to come to the big city of Toronto.

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a couple of guests who are coming to Queen's Park this morning. My staff from the constituency office, Jo-Anne Linton, Fiona Su, and intern Sheila Gu.

Very shortly, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to encourage all of us to welcome Dr. Joseph Wong, founder of ALPHA Education.

I encourage all my colleagues to attend the Nanjing Massacre exhibition in room 230 immediately after question period.

1040

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I just noticed, in the members' gallery, that my student intern has joined us—Allison Headrick, from Oakville Trafalgar High School. Judy Rivard, my constituency assistant, is with her. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome to the gallery today Vinay Singh, who has just walked in. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Last call for introductions.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I am delighted to welcome to Queen's Park today, for the first time ever, Rebekah Harris and Jake Keifer, who are members of my awesome constituency staff in Kitchener Centre.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Mississauga—Brampton South on a point of order.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day, co-sponsored by the member for Mississauga—Brampton South, the member for Windsor—Tecumseh and the member for Dufferin—Caledon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Mississauga—Brampton South is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Member?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I move that the order of the House dated September 22, 2016, referring Bill 16 to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be discharged; and

That the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order be now called; and

That the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member moves that the order of the House dated—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

HAZEL MCCALLION DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR

DE HAZEL MCCALLION

Mrs. Mangat moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day /
Projet de loi 16, Loi proclamant le Jour de Hazel McCallion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merry Christmas, Hazel. Thank you all.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The Liberal members have a choice today, especially the members from Mississauga, Vaughan, Brampton, and York and Durham regions. They can choose to publicly stand with the best interests of their constituents, they can choose to stand for affordability and they can choose to stand against tolls in Toronto. Or they can choose to defend a tax-and-spend Premier, a Premier who is out of touch with the challenges of working commuters who can't afford to pay another \$1,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, what choice will Liberal members make? And will the Premier allow her members to freely vote on the motion before the House today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Before we get into the cut and thrust, I just want to wish everyone in this House, everyone in the gallery and the people of Ontario a very happy holiday time, whatever they celebrate. I want to wish them a merry Christmas, a happy Kwanzaa, a happy Hanukkah, and happy Diwali. Whatever their celebration, I hope that people have a chance to spend time with friends and family.

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to the Leader of the Opposition that there are different ways of doing politics. I believe it's very important that government and all politicians

think about the long term at the same time that they think about the day-to-day, making sure that the decisions we make have a positive impact on people in their day-to-day lives.

But at the same time, we plan for the future and we make investments that are going to make prosperity possible in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: In the 2014 provincial election, the Premier promised the largest infrastructure program in our province's history. We're still waiting. We haven't seen any of those results from municipalities across the province.

In 2015, the Premier announced the fire sale—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. As all of you know, I've been struggling with my voice. It doesn't mean that I still can't get your attention by other means. Even on the last day, if it's required, I'll move into warnings. Yesterday, I even told you it got to a point where I might even move to naming, which is very unorthodox. If I need to apply that, I will do that. I insist on making this as calm as possible, with or without your help.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: In 2015, the Premier promised the fire sale of Hydro One would go towards infrastructure. Not a single cent has gone towards infrastructure.

And then last week, the Auditor General's report showed the Liberals' stunning level of incompetence when it came to managing our infrastructure dollars. It revealed the government is spending infrastructure dollars irresponsibly.

My question is this: Will the Premier come clean to the Legislature and say that the only reason we're considering tolls in Toronto is because of this government's waste, scandal and mismanagement?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Infrastructure will come to order.

Those last two heckles are forcing me to say we're now moving to warnings. You do not understand my resolve. I'll make it happen.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just on the issue of the vote this afternoon: In private members' business, there are free votes. My members will vote the way they choose to, and that's always the case.

To go back to the importance of long-term thinking, I think that decisions have to be made on principle. The principle that we are operating with on this side of the House is that we need to invest in infrastructure. We need to build roads, bridges and transit. It's extremely important that we do that.

The other principle that we operate with is that provincial government must have a respect for municipal government, and that local decision-making is important. As I've said, many of us are here on this side of the House because a previous government did not respect local government, did not pay attention to municipalities, and we're not going to go down that road. We have a deep respect for local government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier did not answer my question of whether these tolls are to pay for the waste and mismanagement. It's like the government is oblivious to the AG's report, oblivious to the irresponsible management of infrastructure dollars.

Let me remind the Premier: The government gave out \$8 million in bonuses to companies paving our roads, despite the fact that the companies falsified the quality of the work. This is a government that paid \$23 million for highway repairs after three years, despite the fact that the roads were supposed to last for 15 years. This is a government that rewarded a company with a \$39-million contract, despite the fact that they built a bridge upside down.

This is not a government that should be introducing new taxes or tolls. Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Finance is warned. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned. The Minister of Transportation is warned.

Anyone else? Thank you.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The AG's report was black and white: This infrastructure spending has been irresponsible. Will the Premier tell the House today that these tolls are only coming to pay for your incredible incompetence on infrastructure spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The billions of dollars that we are investing in infrastructure across the GTHA and across the province, building roads, bridges and transit, are creating 110,000 jobs a year.

1050

I sort of understand why, politically, the Leader of the Opposition would invoke this kind of short-term tactic, but in the long run, if we as a government, if we as a society do not invest in the infrastructure that this province needs, then we will not prosper. We will not be able to provide the jobs for the young people who are the pages today. We will not be able to provide for the prosperity and the innovation in this province that we know is possible.

I'm going to leave short-term thinking to the opposition. We are in this for the long haul to invest in Ontario's future.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They built an upside-down bridge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned. Anyone else want to make their last comment?

New question.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Approval of these tolls, these taxes on the DVP and the Gardiner is not just harmful to the 905; it's harmful to the 416. City staff in Toronto reported—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Stop the clock. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will withdraw.

Hon. David Zimmer: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You are now warned.

Finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: City staff in Toronto reported that congestion on main city streets surrounding the DVP and the Gardiner will increase by as much as 29%. You've got more cars on city streets; it's going to cause more gridlock, more traffic in the 416. The gridlock on Lake Shore Boulevard, the Queensway, Victoria Park, the Danforth and Kingston Road will make life more difficult for drivers in the city of Toronto.

Why is the Premier doing this to the city of Toronto? Why is she doing this to the 905? This is not the Christmas present that commuters in Toronto need.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We covered this ground yesterday. We covered this ground a number of days ago. We've covered this ground repeatedly as the Leader of the Opposition has brought forward these kinds, as the Premier said, of very short-sighted questions.

It could not be more abundantly clear that this Premier and our government understand the importance of making sure that we are investing at the same time that we're partnering with municipalities. At the end of the day, it is the only way for us to make sure that we continue to move the province forward.

For the life of me, given the evidence that we have in front of us, I can't understand why that leader doesn't get it, because—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's not the way I wanted to end it; this is the way you're ending it.

Finish, please, Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, everyone on this side of the House understands how important it is to make sure that we continue to partner with all levels of government, particularly our municipal partners. Premier Kathleen Wynne understands that, everyone on our side

understands that and certainly former Mayor Hazel McCallion understands that.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier is opening a dangerous box. It could create a war of tolls. What if the mayor of Mississauga, Bonnie Crombie, says that she wants a share of the revenue for drivers from Toronto going to the airport? If the mayor of Mississauga asked the Premier for a toll—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can keep getting up. The Minister of Economic Development and Growth is warned.

Mr. Patrick Brown: If the mayor of Mississauga said that Mississauga deserves some revenue for Toronto drivers going to the airport, if they ask for a toll—you've given provincial permission to the city of Toronto. Are you going to say no to the city of Mississauga?

Interjections.

Mr. Patrick Brown: They shake their heads. This can't happen without provincial permission. They are giving provincial permission. Will you give it to Mississauga? Durham is against this. If they want a toll, are you going to give it to Durham? Markham has said that this is taxation without representation.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Where does it end?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Where does this end?

My question is very clear. To the Premier: If Mississauga asked for a toll, if Durham asks for a toll, if Markham asks for a toll, will you say yes, like you have to Toronto?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore is warned and the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock is warned.

Minister of Transportation?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I notice that the member talks about the war of the tolls. Let's talk about the war of the quotes instead of the war of the tolls.

Here I have a quote: "I applaud ... the Wynne government and Metrolinx for their commitment to ensure ... Mississauga receives important infrastructure investments and is at the heart of a plan to build an extensive regionally-integrated transit network." That's from mayor of Mississauga Bonnie Crombie.

In addition to that, that leader was in Durham—he mentioned Durham just a second ago—not that long ago, on August 29 of this year, when he said, "And if there's a resolution of council saying that this is a top priority, then government should try to work with our municipal partners to respect municipal wishes."

He said when he was at Flamborough, "My approach to infrastructure on a municipal level is this: We have to trust our local partners. You have to work with your local partners as much as possible. I'm going to try to defer to the decisions of local council."

This wasn't 10 years ago; it wasn't 20 years ago; it was this year. This is what that leader said at that time, and today has changed his tune.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, these are diversion tactics. That was on new bills on infrastructure. Give me a break—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Toss a couple of Liberals out and it'll quiet down.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question, directly to the Premier: You could start a war of the tolls. You have said that if Toronto asked for it, you'll give them provincial permission. The mayor of Mississauga said that she deserves revenue from drivers from Toronto going to the airport. The mayor of Markham has said essentially the same thing for drivers leaving Toronto.

My question to the Premier, and please don't avoid answering the question: If Mississauga asks for a toll, like the city of Toronto has done, will you give special provincial permission like you're doing for Toronto? Yes or no? Are you going to start a war of the tolls? Be honest with the people of Ontario. For once, just be honest and answer the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York is warned—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And if I saw who said that, I'd warn them, too. Very disappointing. Minister?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I guess I can kind of understand why the leader of the Conservative Party gets upset. I guess I can understand why he gets upset: It's uncomfortable for him to hear his own words of only a few months ago thrown back at him. And then, in his final question, he gets up and suggests that his own words are our diversionary tactics. I don't know; I don't really get it. I really don't know who's writing the material on that side of the House. I really don't understand it at all, Speaker.

Here is what the people on this side of the House, every municipal partner we have and the people of this region know: We are building transit. The last time he and his ilk had a chance, they sold the 407. They sold it. Today, it's tolled. It was tolled then, and they sold it.

At the same time, the Eglinton subway—they didn't just kill it; they killed it and filled it. The only thing they're fond of saying is how they wouldn't build transit, and we are.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If I may, I'd like to, on behalf of New Democrats, our caucus, as well as New Democrats around the province, wish all MPPs, all political staff and legislative staff, members of the media gallery, the Speaker and all Ontarians a happy and safe holiday season, as well as a prosperous new year.

My question is for the Premier. All across this province, people have an incredible desire to build a better Ontario and have a better future for our next generations. But instead of it getting easier to build a future here, it's getting harder.

A good job with benefits is harder to find. People are being treated in hospitals that are overcrowded—dangerously overcrowded—and students are going to schools that are literally crumbling.

1100

Why is this Premier ignoring these problems and letting them get even worse?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I absolutely agree with the leader of the third party that people across this province want to see our province built up. They want to see that bright future. To that end, here are the things that we have been doing. We're making university and college tuition free for middle- and low-income students starting in September 2017—150,000 students. We're taking the HST off electricity bills. That will provide savings to families and businesses throughout the province. We understand there's more to be done, but this will help.

We've made retirement security a priority and we were able to reach a national agreement on the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan. We're doubling the land transfer tax rebate for first-time homebuyers. We're investing historic amounts in child care to create another 100,000 child care spaces. That will make a huge difference for families, particularly mothers who want to go back to work.

Those are the things we're doing that are building this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Response?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What's clear is that this Premier promised to set the reset button and it just didn't happen. Instead, we continue to see a Liberal government that's more interested in helping the Liberal Party than the people of Ontario, a government whose focus is not on good jobs with benefits, a government that stubbornly refuses to stop the sell-off of Hydro One, that continues to neglect the crises that we see in our hospitals and in our schools.

When is this government going to start listening to the people of Ontario and get its priorities straight?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party suggests that somehow there's a partisan bent to the results that we're seeing in the province because of the investments that we're making. I can say, Mr. Speaker, in

the past year, of the 100,000 jobs that have been created across the province, most of those people probably have no political affiliation, but they have jobs because of the investments, because of the work that we're doing in this province. Our unemployment rate is at its lowest level in eight years. That means people across the province are benefiting from that.

I know that there are regional differences and there are demographic differences. We need to make sure that more young people have opportunities. But we are leading the country. We're one of the leading jurisdictions in the country in terms of the unemployment rate and in terms of our GDP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You have a sentence to wrap up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In the first half of this year, the GDP growth in Ontario outstripped that of Canada, the US and almost all G7 countries. What we're doing is working here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What the Premier didn't talk about is how she just, without any notice, got rid of sick leave and bereavement leave for a lot of workers here in the province of Ontario. I'm sure people aren't happy to hear about that. People across Ontario are disappointed. I'm sure the Premier has heard it and I'm certain Liberal MPPs have heard it as well. In fact, Liberal staff in this gallery have heard it as well.

People were hopeful that the Premier would change, that things would change, but she hasn't changed a thing and people are now at a breaking point. They can only take so much. This is the last day of the Legislature in this year of 2016. Will this Premier commit to changing course and start listening to the real concerns that the people have about their province and where it's headed?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I am happy to debate the realities of what is going on in the province and the realities of what we are doing. The leader of the third party talks about an adjustment that was made in terms of personal emergency leave and says that we're getting rid of personal emergency leave and bereavement leave. That's just not true. That is not what is happening. There is an adjustment that is being made, but 10 days is staying as 10 days; it will be seven and three.

If the leader of the third party wants to talk about what's really going on in Ontario, wants to talk about the protections that we are putting in place for people, wants to talk about the fact that 85.5% of kids are graduating from high school, wants to talk about the fact that we have the shortest wait times in the country—if she wants to talk about those things and then talk about what more we can do, I'm happy to have that discussion. But let's deal with the truth, Mr. Speaker.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier as well. Here's a dose of the truth: People in

Hamilton, Brantford and Brant are going to hospitals that are dangerously overcrowded because of Liberal cuts and underfunding to our hospitals. The Auditor General said that it is unsafe for hospitals to be filled beyond 85%; so does the OECD. But this government has no policy on what level of occupancy is safe and has no policies or plans to deal with dangerous overcrowding in Ontario's hospitals.

How's that for a dose of reality? Does the Premier even believe that it's unsafe for hospitals to be filled beyond 85%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, it may be her reality, but it's not the truth.

Here's why I'm so disappointed with the leader of the third party. Yesterday, on CP24, she said, "We have 60% of our hospitals operating at more than 100% occupancy." That's not true. Here's what the Auditor General said—and she was only looking at medicine wards, not all wards in hospitals. She said that last fiscal year, "60% of all medicine wards in Ontario's large community hospitals had occupancy rates higher than 85%"—completely different.

Mr. Speaker, just to add—hopefully to adjust her reality so that she can honestly portray to Ontarians what the facts are—currently, with the most recent information, only one hospital out of more than 150 in the province is currently over capacity—3%; one hospital.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not actually very happy about that—at all. I would ask and advise everyone that we stay away from the unparliamentary accusations that I know you are all aware of. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, as per my question, this government refuses to acknowledge what "capacity" is or isn't. This minister thinks that 100% capacity is appropriate when we know the AG says it is not, the OECD says it is not, and it is not good for the people of Ontario. Shame on him that he likes hallway medicine in this province. Shame on him.

All across northern Ontario, hospitals are filled to beyond safe levels. People in Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay are being put at risk because of overcrowded hospitals. Those are the facts.

Can this Premier and her minister tell people in Ontario—explain to them why their hospitals are overcrowded and why the Liberal government doesn't have any policies or any plans to stop the overcrowding in our hospitals?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Look, we have challenges in our health care system; I will be the first to admit it. But it is

such a disservice to our front-line health care workers, to the Ontario Hospital Association and to those administrators that work so hard, day in and day out.

1110

I admit that there is much more work to be done, but I think we all owe it, when we're speaking in this Legislature, when we're speaking to Ontarians, to speak the truth.

For the member opposite to go on live television yesterday and state that 60% of our hospitals are operating at more than 100% occupancy, when the truth, from the AG herself—she says 60% of our medicine wards in our large community hospitals are at 85% capacity or higher, and the most recent data shows that a single hospital out of more than 150 is over capacity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, how dare this minister, just like the Premier yesterday in question period—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I would ask all members to just kind of tone it down—all members. I don't need armchair quarterbacks to tell me when it's too loud. This is really not the way I think anyone would want us to end this session. Really.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: How dare they shift the blame onto the front-line workers in the hospitals? That is a shameful thing. Registered nurses in this province are ending their shifts in tears, sobbing, because they can't provide the health care they know they should be providing to the people of this province, because of the cuts that this government has made to our hospitals, to our nurses and to our front-line health care workers.

For more than two and a half years, Brampton Civic Hospital has been overcrowded. Mississauga Hospital and Credit Valley Hospital are regularly above 90% capacity. I don't know what this minister's talking about. Those are the facts. Sometimes they're above 100%.

How many patients in Brampton and Mississauga have been treated in a hallway, have ended up with infection, have come home from hospital sicker than when they went in because this government has no policies and they have no plans to deal with the overcrowding in our hospitals?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we'll just have to agree to disagree. You say that 90 out of 150 hospitals are at over 100% capacity. I am saying it's one. The public can choose who to believe. I can provide the facts, from the most recent quarter, that demonstrate that truth—unless perhaps she's thinking about when they were in power, when they closed 24% of hospital beds across this province. That would be understandable.

The Auditor General also said that nine out of 10 people going to emergency are discharged within the provincial and the national target wait times. The Fraser Institute and the Wait Time Alliance have consistently ranked Ontario as having some of the shortest wait times in Canada. We have the shortest wait times in Canada for MRIs, CTs and ultrasounds.

We should be proud of the health care system that the Conference Board of Canada ranked as the seventh-best in the world, ahead of Japan, ahead of Germany, ahead of the United Kingdom and ahead of the United States. We should be proud of that. We should be proud of our front-line health care workers, and not spreading these mistruths and not disparaging our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

The minister will withdraw. You have to have your mike on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question.

HEALTH CARE SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Merry Christmas, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

It is the season of giving, but some gifts we receive are unwanted. Bill 41 yesterday delivered the gift of another layer of bureaucracy and increased red tape for our front-line health care professionals. With a bloated bureaucracy and mountains of red tape, this bill reversed the government's previous intentions and shifted the power away from local decision-making back to the Ministry of Health.

Why did the government not listen to health care professionals and patients, and present Ontarians with this health care lump of coal?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It was a proud moment yesterday in the Legislature when we did pass the Patients First Act, which makes a transformation that not only reduces bureaucracy—I don't understand the member opposite. When we eliminate the CCACs, when we eliminate the boards that run the CCACs and integrate that into the LHINs—I know the member opposite wants to get rid of the LHINs. I happen to believe, in the 10 years that they've been here—local boards, local decision-making—that they've worked closely with our hospitals, with our long-term-care facilities, with home and community care, with our mental health and addictions agencies. This bill allows them to coordinate that care better as well as work with primary care providers, work with public health and, as I mentioned, integrate the home and community care services into their functions.

I'm proud of this bill and, in the supplementary, it's not simply that I'm proud; I'm going to talk about individuals who are also proud and who represent the front-line workers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Minister, the opposition parties of this Legislature presented 73 amendments before committee in relation to Bill 41. These amendments came from those who deliver health care first-hand and who are worried that patient care will suffer under this bill. One of those communities was the francophone community.

La communauté franco-ontarienne, composée de plus de 600 000 citoyens, est très inquiète qu'il n'y ait aucune mention dans la loi pour garantir l'accès aux services de santé en français.

Will the minister assure the francophone community today that they will not be denied home care services in French?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, of course, I'll provide that assurance and commitment. I've worked extremely hard since the moment I became health minister to make sure we not only meet our responsibility to Franco-Ontarians, to francophones in this province who want to and deserve to and have the right to expect to receive their services in the French language. I worked to exceed that commitment and that responsibility under the French Language Services Act. In fact, that act is specifically referenced in the Patients First Act. I have my own council, which is the French Language Health Services Advisory Council. I took their advice. We incorporated it into the bill as we were drafting, and they expressed their 100% satisfaction, and these are individuals who not only represent the francophone community in this province, but they are leaders in the health field and advocate for patients. I took their advice. I'm working very closely with the commissioner as well and will continue to work to ensure that that responsibility is exceeded.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. A new report released this week states that families will spend an extra \$420 on groceries and dining out next year. Food prices overall are expected to rise between 3% and 5% for basics like meat and vegetables.

With too many Ontarians already living in energy poverty thanks to the callous policies of this government, my question to the Premier is: How many Ontario families need to live in energy poverty, and now food poverty, before this government cares enough to take action? When is enough going to be enough?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, I'm pleased to rise and speak about the programs that we've put in place to help those families that are struggling with their electricity bill, that are having a difficult time. I know the Premier has recognized that and has said that we're going to continue to act. That's what I've been doing since I've taken over, almost six months now, as Minister of Energy.

You know, Mr. Speaker, just go back to the speech from the throne a few months back. We brought forward an 8% reduction for all families across the province. Small businesses, families and family farms will receive that 8% reduction come January 1. That's just a few weeks away. That is something that they can look forward to.

For those families that are still struggling, we have many programs that are out there for them to utilize. I do hope that those families contact their local utilities,

contact some of the social services agencies that are out there, to get access to these programs. The Ontario Electricity Support Program is just one of those programs that help many of those families.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Back to the Premier: This report makes it clear that things are only getting harder for families in Ontario. Sylvain Charlebois, the report's lead author, warned, "Those living in Ontario and BC should prepare for above-average food inflation—around 4% to 5%."

1120

With this government still stubbornly digging its heels in and pursuing the sale of Hydro One, and families forced to make impossible decisions between paying for food or hydro, my question to the Premier is: This holiday, will this Premier stop stealing the dignity of Ontario families and tell them that she will make their lives more affordable by stopping the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, in relation to all of the programs that we've put in place, we are helping many of those families that are out there. The Ontario Electricity Support Program has helped 145,000 families already. We're actually doing as much as we can to get more people signed up to this program to help these families, especially during this time of year. We know how important that is.

When it comes to the sale of Hydro One and the broadening of the ownership, just yesterday—the example of the reasons why we're doing this is to build infrastructure and to make the company a better customer-focused company. Yesterday, they reconnected 1,400 families who have been disconnected. That is just an example of this company changing and being broader-based, ensuring that it can help people. That will make sure that they can get into a payment plan, moving forward, as this company continues to grow.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est aussi pour le ministre de l'Énergie, l'honorable Glenn Thibeault.

Speaker, as you'll know, recently the Premier provided a reset on one of the essential goals for this government; that is, making everyday life more affordable for Ontarians. While Ontario's economy is doing well, as we appreciate, not every family is seeing that impact on their personal day-to-day budgets. Perhaps nowhere is that challenge more pressing than on the issue of hydro rates. As the Premier indicated, helping Ontarians with the cost of everyday living is a top priority for our government.

In the speech from the throne from this fall, Speaker, as you'll appreciate, the government announced new measures to curb the cost of electricity for Ontario homes as well as businesses. These measures will take effect on January 1, 2017.

Could the minister please inform this House in somewhat more detail about the measures from the throne speech that will lower electricity costs for Ontarians?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for that question and also for his hard work in this House.

Over the past decade, our electricity system has been transformed from a dirty, aging system to one that is clean and reliable. That transformation was for the better, but the costs of this transition have presented a challenge for some Ontarians. That's why, this fall, we took action. We passed legislation which, beginning January 1—which is only a couple of weeks away—will provide an 8% rebate for every family, farm and small business in this province. At the same time, we will also introduce additional support for the most rural parts of our province and expand the programs for businesses.

Speaker, we're proud of the work that we've done to turn our province into a leader when it comes to clean, reliable electricity, and that's why we're now acting to make this as affordable as possible for as many people as we can.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Je voudrais vous remercier pour votre réponse.

In my own riding of Etobicoke North I know that these programs will be a significant step and very well received by the families and businesses, and of course across the province. The 8% rebate will help to curb electricity costs for Ontarians across the board, while other programs will provide the type of support that keeps our province fair as well as competitive.

I understand that the measures from the speech from the throne are just a few of the many actions the minister has taken and will take to further reduce the costs of electricity. As he has been in office for just a short time—I believe that the minister has been devoted and diligent in executing this government's commitments.

Speaker, would the minister please share with this House some of the other initiatives that our government is taking to lower the costs of electricity in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for that question.

On top of the direct support to ratepayers provided through the speech from the throne, our government has been hard at work to find ways to remove costs from the electricity system. Back in September, we announced that we would suspend further procurement of large renewable generation. This announcement will avoid almost \$4 billion in costs to the system.

In October, we finalized a deal with Quebec to increase and improve our electricity trade, making better use of our system and saving ratepayers \$70 million in the process.

I've been in constant conversation with our partners in the sector, from our agencies to stakeholders to poverty and business advocates, discussing ways to save yet more money for the ratepayers.

I am committed to lowering costs for Ontario ratepayers. Whether it's 50 cents or \$50, I will continue to do everything I can to find reductions that ensure electricity is affordable across the province.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is to the Premier. Last week, the Auditor General tabled her annual report, which further confirmed the Liberal government's stunning incompetence in managing our province.

The Auditor General's report tells us that to get a bed at Ontario Shores mental health centre, patients with the same diagnosis in 2015-16 waited three weeks longer than five years ago. Those with borderline personality disorders, who waited about a month and a half in 2011-12 for outpatient services, are now waiting seven months.

My question to the Premier is this: How can she continue to defend the outrageous increases in wait times that have happened under her government's watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I particularly appreciated this chapter in the Auditor General's report that helped point the way for us to identify challenges in our mental health system, specifically as it pertains to our hospitals that provide acute care for those with mental health and addictions.

She highlights areas where we need to continue to make improvements. For example, she talks about standards of care. Health Quality Ontario has already developed three standards of care in mental health for dementia and for schizophrenia that will allow our health care providers in our hospitals to follow best practices.

With regard to Ontario Shores mental health hospital, I was particularly proud when we made the recent investment to open up beds specifically for individuals with eating disorders. We've increased the operating budget of the hospital by \$2 million this year as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Premier: I've asked the Premier previously about cutbacks at Ontario Shores. My questions have been met with Liberal spin from the health minister. As the clock mercifully runs out on this government, the fact is that its legacy of unprecedented scandal, waste and mismanagement has led to cuts to services Ontarians rely on.

Since the Premier didn't answer my first question, perhaps she will answer this one: Will the Premier fire her health minister for the sake of patients at Ontario Shores?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm not sure if I should be the one answering this part of the question, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Just say no.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: No. I'm hearing a "no."

We recognize, when it comes to mental health and addictions, that there is a lot more work to be done. But I'm proud of the investments that we've made in CAMH, in Ontario Shores, in the Royal, which is in Ottawa, and in Waypoint. We've made substantial new investments in those hospitals.

In fact, I need to mention, because the MPP for Barrie is here—is there; now I can see her—I was recently in Barrie just a couple of weeks ago, where we announced a brand new inpatient and outpatient youth and child

mental health unit, which will be providing a number of inpatient beds at the Royal Vic in Barrie, as well as being able to serve more than 3,000 individuals on a daily basis.

These are the kinds of investments that we are making. We know we have to not only reduce and eliminate the stigma; we need to invest more money—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. While this government sits idly by and makes excuses, the rising price of electricity continues to make life more difficult for our most vulnerable citizens.

The Downtown Mission in Windsor used to serve about 1,100 people a month. Now they serve 800 a week. It seems this is the only business that expands as hydro prices soar.

1130

Speaker, will this government admit that their token hydro rebate is too little too late and that the sell-off of Hydro One is a mistake, and finally commit to providing real relief for people living on a low income? And I'll repeat, because the Premier wasn't listening: They went from 1,100 people a month to 800 people a week.

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: No, you weren't listening, Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a reminder that you speak to the Chair, please.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is very important to me that we recognize that there is more that needs to be done in terms of hydro prices. As the Minister of Energy has said, we made an announcement in the throne speech that we were taking 8% off people's electricity bills. We already had in place the Ontario energy support program, which is targeted at exactly the people who are living on low income, who need support. That's why that program is in place.

As the Minister of Energy said, Hydro One is paying closer attention. The fact that those 1,400 people who have been cut off have been reinstated—the company is more attuned to what is going on in the community. But we know there's more to be done, and we will continue to work to find solutions.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can do more than one thing at a time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: People of Ontario are well aware that the Premier can multi-task. She can slash, cut and privatize all at once.

Again to the Premier: If this government was doing enough, then the people in Windsor wouldn't be going

hungry. The mission wouldn't see an explosion in the population they serve. Essex Powerlines is installing load limiters at residences facing disconnection, allowing them to run a bare minimum amount of hydro so people can either heat or eat. The Keep the Heat program in Windsor has already helped more people in 2016 than in 2015, and that number will continue to grow.

While businesses, charities and non-profits are doing all they can, this government continues to make life more difficult. Speaker, will the Premier make providing real relief from hydro bills and stopping any further sell-off of Hydro One her New Year's resolution in 2017?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know the Premier mentioned this, but, yesterday Hydro One reconnected 1,400 families, just to show that they're actually a better customer-focused company. And that's what's happening with the broadening of Hydro One: They are becoming customer-focused.

When it comes to disconnections, we recognize that there's more to do. That's why we've put in Bill 27, to give the OEB more power to ban all disconnections in the winter months. But unfortunately, it's sitting in front of committee, because the opposition chooses not to act. They could have passed that with unanimous consent. We could have been making sure that that bill would have passed, and we could have worked with the LDCs to have that implemented ASAP, but unfortunately, they chose not to.

We on this side of the House recognize that we can continue to find ways to help those who are struggling, and we've done that: an 8% reduction, 20% for our rural folks, and we've got the OESP and other programs.

CHILD CARE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Associate Minister of Education for early years and child care.

Minister, I'm proud our government has made it a priority to improve and expand child care and early years programs in our province. In my riding of Davenport, I have heard from parents who say that demand for quality, affordable child care is great. It is encouraging to know the government is working to address the needs of Ontario families.

Just earlier this morning, I was proud to stand beside the Minister of Education to announce a new community hub in my riding of Davenport. Part of that announcement was that we were indeed securing child care spaces at Bloor and Dufferin. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, my constituents would like to know what the government is doing to make sure families' needs are properly met.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Davenport for this very important question.

I am proud that our government is making child care a top priority. In fact, our government has created a

position dedicated to early learning and child care. This is a clear indication that we are committed to Ontario's children and families. We are putting people first.

Since we took office, we have more than doubled child care funding to municipalities to over \$1 billion a year, and the number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario has doubled since 2003. In September, we committed to doubling the number of spaces again. Over the next five years, we will be creating space for 100,000 new children to attend child care, and we're committing to improving and integrating our early years programs to better serve families.

Speaker, we've already begun public consultations to inform our framework. In fact, I attended a consultation last night in Toronto. We've held town hall meetings—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for that answer. It's encouraging to know that you are heading to towns and cities across the province to meet with families and sector leaders. I recognize that there is a lot of work to be done, but people involved in the child care and early years sector are keen to see how the system will be modernized, and parents are eager to see these new spaces open up.

The commitment of 100,000 new spaces in over five years: When can Ontario families expect to see these rolling out?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to answer the member's question. I know that families and stakeholders are excited about this, and so are we. This is a historic investment, one that will benefit all of Ontario, which is why we are moving quickly and thoroughly.

As we heard recently in the fall economic statement, we've already taken our first step in creating 100,000 additional licensed child care spaces by 2022. We have invested an additional \$65.5 million in this school year to support the creation of 3,400 spaces for infants, toddlers and young children. This investment promotes early learning and development while helping more parents find quality, affordable care. It's the first step. We continue to build an early years and child care system that is high quality, seamless and meets the needs of parents and children.

FLOOD PREVENTION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The mouth of the Nottawasaga River at Wasaga Beach has filled with sediment, and that has made boat passage between the river and Nottawasaga Bay virtually impossible. This includes vessels operated by first responders. But worst of all, if there's a heavy thaw next spring and the mouth of the river is restricted, ice could accumulate and form a dam that potentially causes river water levels to rise. This would cause flooding upstream, impacting hundreds of people.

The town is earmarking \$100,000 for dredging, money they shouldn't have to spend. Wasaga Beach council

would like to know: Why is the municipality faced with footing the bill for dredging the river when it is a provincial responsibility?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much to the member for that question. My ministry has been reviewing the town's dredging work permit application, and we've been out to assess the river to assess local conditions. Through this work, my ministry has determined that there's not an imminent threat of flooding, nor an emergency situation at this time.

Speaker, it's worth noting that before any dredging takes place, an environmental assessment will need to be completed to identify potential environmental risks or effects, including impacts to lake sturgeon and other species at risk, water flows and shoreline erosion.

It's also important to note that dredging can have significant impacts. It can be highly disruptive to important habitats and natural conditions, and it's also common for a change in weather conditions to contribute to the natural process of washing out the accumulated sediment and potential further opening of the mouth of the river.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the speaker: With all due respect to the minister, we've been hearing this "blah blah blah blah" for several years now. The speaking notes haven't changed, no matter who the minister is over there.

It's clear to everyone, including local engineers—maybe the MNR doesn't agree, but the new MNR doesn't seem to agree with any municipalities anymore. The fact of the matter is, it's clear to everybody involved, except the MNRF, that it's time to dredge the river again.

We've had severe flooding in the past. Right now, there's nothing wrong. I'm talking about the thaw that'll occur in the spring. Hundreds of homes will be affected and hundreds of thousands of people could be affected. Why don't we just prevent that and prevent those millions of dollars' worth of damage, spend \$100,000 now, do what the town wants and what everybody involved wants and get 'er done?

1140

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Respectfully, to the member opposite, thank you for the supplementary question. But due to the fact that the work permit has not yet been approved, it would be inappropriate to discuss any costs that may or may not occur out of this.

I'd also like to remind the member opposite that, through our work, my ministry has determined that there's not an imminent threat of flooding nor an emergency situation at this time. If that changes, then we'll certainly be out there to reassess that. We'll continue to work with the town, providing advice, guidance and support during the required environmental assessment that's at work already.

I also wanted to point out that since the last time that dredging was permitted, in the year 2010, new information on species at risk in the river, specifically lake sturgeon, has come to light. Because of this, it's necessary for any future dredging projects to be assessed, planned and carried out in a way that's protective of the environment and the habitat of the river.

CASINOS

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. The OLG is currently in the process of putting forward the RFPQ and an RFP for a new casino operator in Niagara Falls. The way this process works, the focus is on upfront payments to the government and not on economic development, investment, job creation and, equally important, job protection. The Niagara Falls city council has passed three unanimous resolutions, and the Niagara regional council recently passed another one to support it.

Will the Premier commit today to delay the RFP and the RFPQ process to allow for it to be rewritten, giving greater weight to job creation, investment, economic development and job protection, as requested by the city of Niagara Falls and the entire Niagara region?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls. We've had ongoing discussions about this very issue, recognizing how important it is for us to modernize Fallsview and Casino Niagara as requested by council. In fact, we established a new bundle in order for them to be able to participate in that modernization process.

It's all about building and creating more jobs and helping the economy in the local community. It's why we proceeded to go this way, again at their request. Furthermore, we've committed to the new Niagara entertainment centre, which will be part of this bundle, enabling even further employment and greater attraction into the community.

We are going to proceed in a transparent and fair procurement process, as required, and as indicated to the city council. We'll continue to work with them, recognizing how important it is to the local community and, frankly, to the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Premier: The casinos in Niagara gain up to 80% of their business from the GTA. They are the biggest employer in Niagara, with 4,000 employees, and create millions of dollars in economic benefits for our province. People want to travel to Niagara because they know it's a world-class destination.

Unfortunately, the way the RFPQ and the RFP process is being run, we know that the big-name gaming companies aren't going to bid. If they don't bid, less people will travel from Toronto and that will put 1,500 good jobs in Niagara on the chopping block. We need to delay this process to ensure that big companies bid, because we cannot afford to let 1,500 workers lose their jobs.

When the city of Ottawa asked for the casino RFP to be delayed, that request was granted. Will the Premier follow her own lead and delay the process for the new Niagara casino operator, as requested by the city of Niagara Falls and the entire Niagara region?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member from Niagara Falls has just reinforced our position. We know how important it is for the local community of Niagara Falls to have an attraction, like Casino Niagara, like Fallsview and like the new entertainment complex that's being put forward. We also recognize how important Ontario Lottery and Gaming is to the province of Ontario. Over \$2 billion are sourced as a dividend, which goes directly to the communities. For Niagara Falls, it has been one of the essential contributions to its local economy. We want it to grow.

The member is making reference to job creation and protection of jobs. Well, that's part of the agreement within the RFPQ as it stands now. Furthermore, we've engaged a fairness monitor to ensure the integrity of the process so that all stakeholders that are engaged in the process are acting fairly. We have to abide by that as well. We're going to take the necessary steps to ensure integrity and fairness—more importantly, working very closely with the local community to provide greater economic benefit to Niagara Falls.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, just recently you tabled the fall economic statement detailing the economic outlook and fiscal review for the province, where you announced changes for first-time homebuyers.

I often hear from my constituents in Barrie that they are concerned about not being able to afford their first home, and that they are finding it difficult to get their foot in the front door of the property market.

I can imagine the frustration as young people work so hard to get out of the endless cycle of paying rent. I remember how scary it was signing the cheque for the deposit on our first house, when the house only cost \$28,000 in total. Things have changed.

Could the minister please explain how the recent changes announced in the fall economic statement will benefit Ontario homebuyers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member for Barrie for her outstanding work and support of her local community.

We all recognize that many people have benefited from recent increases in the value of their homes, but still, some young families and others looking to buy their first home are having a challenging time in getting into the housing market.

Buying your first home is one of the most exciting decisions of a young person's life, but many are worried about how they'll be able to afford their first condo or their first house. To address this and to help young families, we're doubling the maximum refund for first-time

homebuyers from \$2,000 to \$4,000, starting January 1, 2017, provided everybody supports this bill today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Back to the Minister of Finance: This is an important step for first-time homebuyers looking to enter the housing market. I'm pleased to hear that the government is taking steps to invest in supports that improve housing affordability and that can help people in their everyday lives.

Can the Minister of Finance please explain further how these changes will make a difference for first-time homebuyers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, I'm very happy to respond to the member's question.

These changes are about making it easier for young families to enter the housing market. With these changes, no land transfer tax, the LTT, will be payable on the first \$368,000 of the cost of that first home. It also means that more than half of first-time homebuyers would pay no LTT at all.

The housing market is critically important as a source of economic growth and employment in the province of Ontario. Improving housing affordability will help more Ontarians to participate. I look forward to the members opposite supporting this outstanding initiative for the people of Ontario.

ONTARIO FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL INDUSTRY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. SimFront is a high-tech start-up in eastern Ontario. A company official contacted me to express his incredible frustration with the Ontario Media Development Corp. and the digital media tax credit supported by all three parties.

His experience shows why Ontario's economy is struggling under this Liberal government. It took a staggering 55 weeks just to process SimFront's application and confirm they are eligible for an \$819,000 digital media tax credit. Over 20 weeks later, they're hearing it could be another six months before they get it.

SimFront is anxious to reinvest and create jobs, something we used to encourage in Ontario. Does the minister agree that two years to process a tax credit is unacceptable? If so, why hasn't she fixed these obvious problems at an agency that's under her responsibility?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: It's always my pride and pleasure to stand in this House to talk about our growing film and television sector, particularly the role that the OMDC plays: an outstanding group of individuals who are helping us lead the world, quite frankly, in innovation and enhance our investments in film and television.

I find it passing interesting on two fronts—thank you for your question, by the way, to the honourable member. But I find it passing interesting on two fronts: (1) that he chose to raise this question in this arena rather than coming and talking to me about it, because I would have been delighted to help him out and have my officials try

to address the situation; and (2) that the party opposite has consistently not supported our investments in an industry that is leading the world in innovation.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education on a point of order.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to correct my record. In my introduction this morning, I referred to the group here as MSAC; it's actually the Ontario Student Trustees' Association. Their president, Kayvon Mihan, was here this morning along with Dasha, Nicolas, Hannah, Stefan and Aidan. I'd like to welcome them.

VISITORS

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I know it's not a point of order, but I beg your indulgence. My daughter, Christie Nash, joined us, and my grandson, Paxson Wallace.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: On a point of order: I'd like to welcome Camesha Cox from my constituency office, as well as Michelle Nguyen and Tigist Zemene.

Mr. Han Dong: I see there's another member from my—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I already acknowledged him.

Mr. Han Dong: Good try, to the member across.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the other constituency assistant. Ms. Daiana Ferrari is in the public gallery with us today. Welcome.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mr. Speaker, maybe you'll indulge us because it is the Christmas season. Our grandson, Leopold Gianni Michele Colucci, is one year old today.

Ms. Soo Wong: The founder of ALPHA Education, Flora Chong, the executive director, and Dr. Sarah Kleeb, also from ALPHA Education, are here today. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

VIOLA DESMOND

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I just got this notice. I wasn't aware of this, but I understand that Viola Desmond has just become the first woman in Canada to be on a banknote. She is a wonderful woman who has an incredible heritage in Nova Scotia standing up for people, in particular black women. So I'm really thrilled to advise the House of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much for pointing that out. A couple of hours ago, I was able to do that. I appreciate the Minister of Education announcing that.

I grew up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and I went to that same Roseland Theatre. Today, I know I speak for the 9,080 people who still live in New Glasgow when I say that to have Viola Desmond recognized for her civil rights work and her leadership—there's a great quote by Margaret Mead that says, "Never doubt that a small group of ... committed citizens can change the world." Indeed, those are the only people who ever have. Growing up in Nova Scotia, we knew who Viola Desmond and Carrie Best were because they were trailblazers.

We have a significant black community in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. I joke that there were 10,000 people when I lived there and grew up there and there are probably 9,000 there now, but the reality is that Viola Desmond's story needs to be taught in our school system more. She needs to be taught nationally. The fact of the matter is, she was Rosa Parks before there was a Rosa Parks.

This is a great day for Canadian women and for all Canadians.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No more sleeps.

DEFERRED VOTES

ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to provincial elections / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne les élections provinciales.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 7, 2016, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 45, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to provincial elections. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul
Anderson, Granville	Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hoggarth, Ann	Oosterhoff, Sam
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Patrick	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lalonde, Marie-France	Singh, Jagmeet

Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John

Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McNaughton, Monte
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BUILDING ONTARIO UP FOR EVERYONE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 VISANT À FAVORISER L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO POUR TOUS (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 70, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1203 to 1204.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 70, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France

Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The yeas are 51; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I entertain a motion, I would like to say to you that it's the last day for our pages. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank the pages very much for all the work that they have done and for their commitment.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm told that they have offered to come back on December 25, so we'll have to see about that. I'm not sure.

Anyway, I would like to recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. Her Honour awaits.

1210

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meetings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning / Loi modifiant ou abrogeant

diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement du territoire.

An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day / Loi proclamant le Jour de Hazel McCallion.

An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents / Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance en ce qui concerne la relation entre un enfant et ses grands-parents.

An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine albanais.

An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care / Loi modifiant diverses lois dans l'intérêt des soins axés sur les patients.

An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day / Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation au PANDAS/PANS.

An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de mars Mois du patrimoine bangladais.

An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to provincial elections / Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne les élections provinciales.

An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur en ce qui a trait aux points de récompense.

An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine hindou.

An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week / Loi proclamant la Semaine des infirmières praticiennes et infirmiers praticiens.

An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

An Act to revive Computers Mean Business Inc.

An Act to revive Ranger Survey Systems Canada Inc.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur la lieutenant-gouverneure sanctionne ces projets de loi.

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, may I, on behalf of all Ontarians, thank each and every member of this House for the service and the dedication they have provided in the name of the citizens of this province, and may I wish all of you a very joyous holiday season and a peaceful year to come. Thank you.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to take a moment to echo the Lieutenant Governor and thank each and every one of you for the service that you give to the province of Ontario. I wish for you a merry Christmas, a happy new year and all of the blessings that the season brings to you and your family. I wish for you some rest. I wish for you peace.

I also want to re-emphasize, time and time again, the amount of work that you do—an awful lot of unseen work, and time away from your family. The work that you do in your constituency offices is second to none. I'm so proud of this group. Thank you. Merry Christmas.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further bills or anything else to do at this moment, so this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1215 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? Introduction of guests? I do have, I believe, someone who wants to introduce a guest. I think the member from Thornhill would like to introduce somebody.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Ari Moghimi and Adrian Cormier. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Any other introductions?

I do have one. In the Speaker's gallery today, we have a former member from Yorkview from 1990 to 1995, Mr. Giorgio Mammoliti. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SIMORGH GALA

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome Ari Moghimi and Adrian Cormier, because Ari was actually kind of my host; he invited me to come to a Persian gala that took place last week. It was called the Simorgh Gala. Simorgh is—if I may, Mr. Speaker, show a picture—a bird that stands for unity, and not just unity within the Persian community, but unity between all the different communities in my very diverse riding of Thornhill, as well as all the different communities that we have here in Ontario.

We all know that it's the holiday season, and we all want to work together to learn about each other's cultures, learn about the different holidays and the different customs, but also to make some good friends and cherished memories within the community.

One of the very great recipients who received awards that night is somebody I've gotten to know very well, Ahmad Tabrizi. He started out as a chemical and petro-

chemical engineer in Iran and earned a master's degree in 1969. He didn't realize that in the coming years he would be a very integral part of the Iranian community here in Canada. Mr. Tabrizi is currently the president and founder of the Parya Trillium Foundation, the first Iranian community centre in Canada, and it's in my riding of Thornhill. How lucky are we?

So I want to say congratulations to all the recipients, specifically my very dear friend Ahmad. We're looking forward to many more events at the Parya centre.

RACISM

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm rising today to discuss a very serious matter of systemic racism that exists and has been shown to exist in the York region public school board.

Earlier this year, we came to learn how a principal in this region made some very Islamophobic comments on social media. They were very clear. It was all across social media. Parents complained about it, but the board did nothing. The principal remained in the school, making parents and their children feel unwelcome and unsafe because of the climate that was created by these anti-Muslim, Islamophobic comments. In fact, other members of the community came forward. Members of the black community came forward and said, "Listen, we've also experienced anti-black racism."

As a member of an ethic community, of a racialized community, of an equity-seeking community, we need to show solidarity with all community members seeking to be treated with justice and fairness. Schools, particularly, need to be places where people are safe. Those students only make up a small percentage of our population; they make up 100% of our future. We need to ensure that schools are safe and that school boards understand and that they implement policies that protect people against any sort of prejudice, any sort of bigotry.

Right now, people in York region are feeling unwelcome, they feel unsafe, and they feel disrespected. This government has an obligation and a responsibility to ensure that no further acts of prejudice, of racism and of bigotry can continue in this region. We need to ensure that there is strong leadership so that our students have a strong and safe place to learn.

SCUGOG LAKE STEWARDS

Mr. Granville Anderson: I am pleased to rise today to bring attention to a very important development in the township of Scugog. Recently, local council gave conditional approval to the Scugog Lake Stewards project to improve the health and wellness of the lake. The goal of the project is threefold:

—develop a naturally engineered wetland to naturally act as a stormwater treatment area;

—build an additional accessible shoreline walkway featuring a new iconic bridge structure, educational signage and connections to existing trails connecting the

beach area at Palmer Park with the point near Vos' Your Independent Grocer.

—dredge a large acreage of Lake Scugog to improve the health of the lake and surrounding shoreline, increase recreational usage, improve aesthetics and provide economic, environmental, recreational and social benefits to Scugog township.

Picturesque Lake Scugog is a top attraction in beautiful downtown Port Perry, and I'm very thankful for the work the Scugog Lake Stewards have done and will continue to do to improve the lake.

Special thanks to Barbara, Bill, Rob, Bobbie and the rest of the team for their commitment to their community. I appreciate very much the work they are doing and will continue to do.

CASINOS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Fallsview Casino Resort and Casino Niagara have made Niagara Falls the premier gaming destination in Canada, and it's important for Niagara that the area's two resort casinos continue to flourish.

In fact, Niagara Falls city council has unanimously, three times, called upon the Ministry of Finance, through the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., to immediately include Niagara's two resort casinos in its modernization plans. However, the OLG did not consult the city of Niagara Falls when they published the request for pre-qualifications and request for proposals regarding the modernization process. And the city of Niagara Falls was not engaged by OLG to discuss the details of the RFPQ and was only notified the day before its release. And the RFPQ stresses a model that is strictly based upon revenue generation.

The RFPQ is not designed to retain and create new gaming or spinoff jobs, encourage investment and serve as a catalyst for economic development, which is contrary to the city's express goals and objectives. Therefore, the government should ensure that the city's goals and objectives are considered, and the city should be treated as a key partner in this process.

JUSTIN MASOTTI

Miss Monique Taylor: I rise again to plead on behalf of Justin Masotti, a 17-year-old from Hamilton battling an extremely rare form of brain cancer. Unable to get effective treatment in Ontario, Justin is receiving alternative treatment in Mexico. To date, OHIP has refused to cover the cost of this treatment.

Justin and his family are in desperate need of assistance from this government. As requested, the minister now has the request for payment of out-of-country health services form signed by Justin's doctor, and I'm asking the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, again, to help.

Two days ago, I presented petitions in the Legislature signed by over 2,000 people. Today, I will be presenting another 1,400. These signatures were collected in just a

few days, reflecting the depth of concern felt by our community.

This evening, a fundraiser is being held at St. Thomas More school at 1045 Upper Paradise Road, starting at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come out and enjoy the live music, baked goods and silent auction.

That's what our community is doing.

But Justin needs this government to step up to the plate. Again, I ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to fund the transportation and medical costs for Justin Masotti on compassionate grounds.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Arthur Potts: 'Twas the last day before Christmas, and all through the House

Members were stirring, to get home to their spouse;

Their constits were hopeful, from media glare

That promises made would eventually be there

House duty, committees, and stakeholder receptions,

All done with élan, to no one's objections

Premier Wynne answering questions with care,

Assuring that green energy would soon be everywhere,

Patrick Brown all snug in his bed,

With visions of by-elections dancing in his head.

1310

And Speaker will tell you if you're naughty or nice,

"Come to order," he'll say, but only just twice.

So come Lou and Harinder, Jagmeet and Joe Dixon,

Del Duca knows well our highways need fixin'.

And crumbs left from Santa, once resting on plates,

Now caught in the 'staches of Percy and Gates.

And as the House rises, all with great smiles,

As Santa's sleigh is secured with loyalty Air Miles.

So when the House rises, I'll let out a big cheer,

The Tories' filibustering is done for the year!

Speaker, I would like to wish every member of the House a very merry Christmas, happy holidays, a happy new year and a safe year in 2017. Thank you.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise to speak about Employment Ontario. Last week, the Auditor General confirmed the government's inability to competently and successfully encourage job creation. The government spends more than \$1 billion a year on skills development programs without knowing what the jobs of today and tomorrow are.

Many of the Auditor General's findings were deeply troubling. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development does not collect or analyze regional information on Ontario's labour force. Only 38% are finding full-time employment through the Employment Service program and fewer than half of those who begin an apprenticeship program complete it.

It's even more worrying when you note that youth unemployment in Ontario remains well above the nation-

al average. Yet the government appears more interested in flashy headlines than in ensuring Ontarians are prepared for the workforce.

We'll continue to hold the government accountable for Ontario's growing skills gap, because it's time for this government to take real action and stop graduating people for yesterday's jobs.

ENGAGEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Je me lève aujourd'hui pour saluer l'engagement communautaire dans Ottawa-Vanier. J'ai eu l'occasion vendredi dernier de participer au 11^e petit Déjeuner Flocons de neige à Vanier. Le petit Déjeuner Flocons de neige est une activité communautaire annuelle qui est une vraie tradition au Centre Pauline-Charron à Vanier. Encore une fois, l'événement a dépassé son objectif de financement et il a amassé plus de 60 000 \$.

Je veux ici souligner, à l'aube de la période des fêtes, comment il est important de s'engager au niveau communautaire. Je veux féliciter, évidemment, tous les organisateurs de cet événement, les bénévoles, les cuisiniers, les commanditaires qui ont été responsables de cette organisation. Entre autres, l'infatigable Barra Thiom, qui est l'organisateur en chef de l'événement, est vraiment un leader dans notre communauté, ainsi que toute l'équipe du Centre des services communautaires Vanier. Ces centres de services sont importants pour nos communautés actives et engagées.

I wanted, today, as we enter the festive season, to salute all who, through their labour and commitment, make Ottawa-Vanier the place that it is. It was truly wonderful to see all sectors, businesses, schools and various organizations from all communities coming together to celebrate their community and their social engagement.

Merci donc aux organisateurs pour ce vibrant témoignage de la vitalité communautaire à Vanier, un quartier accueillant, généreux, fier et plein d'avenir que j'ai l'honneur de représenter.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: "We're back and we're hiring" was the message at a recent flag-raising ceremony at the gigantic steelworks in Nanticoke. A little over a year ago, the reformed Stelco began a process of re-establishing itself as an independent Canadian steel company at both Nanticoke and Hamilton. Employing more than 2,200 people under president Michael McQuade, these fully integrated, industry-leading facilities are among the most safe, environmentally progressive and productive steel plants in the world.

We also return to the 1929 Stelco dog-bone logo, which represents the initial stage of reforming a steel bar. Then, as now, the restored logo was proudly stamped on

military equipment destined for the front lines of World War II. I'll point out that the very tip of the tallest free-standing structure in the western hemisphere is proudly made of Stelco steel.

Commissioned in 1980, Lake Erie Works employs 1,400 people. Unionized employees are represented by United Steelworkers Local 8782 and 8782(B), under president Bill Ferguson. Lake Erie Works has a coke battery, blast furnace, two steel-making vessels, a twin-strand slab caster, a hot strip mill and three pickling lines, with 6,600 acres zoned industrial, and a 1.2-kilometre Lake Erie dock handling St. Lawrence Seaway-dimension ships.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on Hydro One—Management of Electricity Transmission and Distribution Assets, section 3.06 of the 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report, entitled Hydro One—Management of Electricity Transmission and Distribution Assets, section 3.06 of the 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Monte Kwinter; Harinder Malhi; Peter Milczyn; Julia Munro; and Arthur Potts.

The committee extends its appreciation to the officials from the Ministry of Energy, Hydro One and the Ontario Energy Board for their attendance at the hearings. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in legislative research.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING PATIENTS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PATIENTS

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes / Projet de loi 87, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre des mesures concernant la santé et les personnes âgées par l'édiction, la modification ou l'abrogation de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This is a bill that amends various acts in the interest of protecting patients. This bill amends the Immunization of School Pupils Act, the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act, the Health Insurance Act, the Public Hospitals Act, the Ontario Drug Benefit Act, the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Elderly Persons Centres Act.

ASBESTOS USE PROHIBITION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 INTERDISANT L'UTILISATION DE L'AMIANTE

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act prohibiting the use of asbestos / Projet de loi 88, Loi interdisant l'utilisation de l'amiante.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Robert Bailey: This bill bans the use, reuse, import and transport or sale of asbestos in Ontario. It also requires the Ministry of Labour to create a register of all provincially owned or leased buildings containing asbestos and for that register to be updated from time to time as work to remove asbestos from buildings listed on the register is completed.

1320

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN À L'ENFANCE, À LA JEUNESSE ET À LA FAMILLE

Mr. Coteau moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and

Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 89, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, modifiant et abrogeant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Michael Coteau: This is An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts. These changes would improve outcomes for children, youth and families in Ontario by increasing oversight and accountability, strengthening relationships with indigenous partners, and ensuring services are provided in a culturally appropriate manner.

I want to thank the ministry officials who are here joining us for all their hard work.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SCHOOL SAFETY ZONES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (ZONES DE SÉCURITÉ SCOLAIRE)

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of school safety zones / Projet de loi 90, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les zones de sécurité scolaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Mike Colle: If passed, this bill would establish designated school safety zones around our elementary and high schools that would be standardized across the province with road markings, flashing lights and "children crossing" signs to remind motorists to slow down and watch for children in school areas.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have thousands of petitions regarding electricity prices. This reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current government took office; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

"Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

"Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

"Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

I support this, have signed it and will give it to page Henry.

KOMOKA PROVINCIAL PARK

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition on an issue that has really struck a chord in London West. I want to thank the Thames Valley Trail Association for helping collect signatures. It is called "Remove the new fees from Komoka Provincial Park.

"Whereas Komoka Provincial Park has long served residents and visitors to London, offering free access to beautiful views and numerous recreational hiking trails; and

"Whereas evidence has shown that access to the natural environment helps to reduce stress, improve mental well-being, and lower risks for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks and cancer; and

"Whereas new parking fees ranging from \$5.75 to \$14.50 for daily use of Komoka Provincial Park have been imposed without consultation and without additional amenities to justify the new costs, appearing to be simply a cash grab by the Liberal government; and

"Whereas the lack of bike lanes and bus routes connecting Komoka Provincial Park to London, and the prohibition on roadside parking, requires almost all visitors to drive to the park and pay to park their vehicles; and

"Whereas the new fees are likely to decrease park visits with negative consequences for community health and well-being;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry eliminate the parking fees introduced in August 2016 to ensure that Komoka Provincial Park remains accessible to residents of the city of London and all Ontarians."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and will give it to page Kaitlyn to take to the table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here signed by a great number of constituents in my riding and, in fact, from other parts of the province as well.

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

"Whereas the energy policies of this Liberal government ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator, and resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province; and

"Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time to present it on behalf of my constituents.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm very proud to present this petition to the Minister of Health and to thank the young man who worked so hard collecting these signatures, Hassnain Khan. It reads:

"Petition for OHIP Coverage for Out-of-Country Cancer Treatments for Justin Masotti #KeepJustinAlive.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 17-year-old Justin Masotti of Hamilton is battling an extremely rare form of brain cancer that has not responded to traditional cancer treatment;

"Whereas the alternative cancer treatments he is now receiving out-of-country appear to be having a positive impact on him;

"Whereas the huge costs already incurred by his family to fund his out-of-country treatments are not being covered by OHIP as they are considered experimental;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, on compassionate grounds, fund the transport and medical costs associated with the out-of-country cancer treatment of Justin Masotti."

I couldn't agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I hope the government does the right thing and keeps Justin alive.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: "Whereas Ontario has the highest electricity rates in all of North America, and the provincial government has recognized an oversupply now exists at the exorbitant cost to taxpayers;

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"Whereas reports of wind farm construction causing source water contamination of the underlying contact aquifer in the former Dover township of Chatham-Kent municipality reported to the Ontario Ministry of Energy in 2012;

"Whereas a proper investigation of the nature of the contamination and the cause of the contamination in the source water under the former Dover township of the Chatham-Kent municipality has not been conducted by the MOECC;

"Whereas a proper subsequent investigation by a qualified toxicologist to determine if a risk to population health exists from the source water contamination under the former Dover township in the municipality of Chatham-Kent has not been conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Health;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately halt the construction of North Kent 1 and Otter Creek wind farms until proper investigation by" the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change "and the Ontario Ministry of Health are completed and proper remediation plans are then put in place to protect

source water resources and prevent well interference in the municipality of Chatham-Kent."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and give it to page Calida.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank Jen Michaud from Black Lake in my riding for sending me this petition. Black Lake is in Lively, in Walden.

"Whereas the provincial funding formula does not recognize differences across the province, forces local school boards to compete with each other for students and does not allow capital dollars to be transferred to operating accounts when it makes sense; and

"Whereas school boards have now been forced into situations where they have to propose school closures due to inflexible policies and programs of the province; and

"Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), modified accommodation reviews are allowed with inadequate community consultation and insufficient assessment of the full impacts of school closures, particularly where schools being proposed for closure will result in no school at all in an area; and

"Whereas the" Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline "is flawed and school closures proposed under it will result in negative student outcomes and opportunities, irreversible impacts to families and communities and will undermine the mandates of municipalities and other provincial ministries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To place an immediate moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the" Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline "and all funding programs have been subject to a substantial review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the academic, social, environmental and economic fabric of students, families, communities and the province."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Will to bring it to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind

and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government’s lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians’ electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

I am pleased to sign my name and give this petition to page Lauren to bring to the table.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition that’s long but I’m going to shorten it down for you.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ojibway Prairie Complex is a five-park system totalling 332 hectares. It represents half of the city of Windsor’s remaining natural areas;

“Whereas Ojibway has 160 species at risk.... It represents Canada’s ... most endangered ecosystem;

“Whereas over 4,000 species live on the site...;

“These parks are ... designated as natural heritage, environmentally significant areas ... a provincially significant wetland (PSW) and an area of natural and scientific interest (ANSI)...;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To designate this land with provincial importance and prevent any development on or adjacent to this land....”

I agree fully. I will sign it and give it to page Liam to bring up to the desk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you for abbreviating your petition.

HIGHWAY RAMPS

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Whereas the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will continue to have robust growth of population and commercial activity in proximity to the Holland Marsh...;

“Whereas the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400 provide critical access for farm operations...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the council of the corporation of the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury hereby advises the Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, that the town does not support the elimination of the Canal Road ramps ... and further, that the town requests that the duration of the temporary closure ... be minimized to the greatest extent possible during the Highway 400/North Canal bridge replacement project.”

I have affixed my signature, as I’m in agreement with this, to give it to page Charis.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition signed by hundreds of people across the province. It reads:

“Support Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence.

“Whereas half of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and approximately every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner; and

“Whereas a 2014 national survey showed that Canadian workers who experience domestic violence often disclose the violence to a co-worker, and that the violence frequently follows the worker to work; and

“Whereas the experience of domestic violence and sexual violence can cause significant physical, mental, emotional and financial hardship for survivors, their families, and society as a whole; and

“Whereas Canadian employers lose \$78 million annually due to domestic violence, and \$18 million due to sexual violence, because of direct and indirect impacts that include distraction, decreased productivity, and absenteeism; and

“Whereas workers who experience domestic violence or sexual violence should not have to jeopardize their employment in order to seek medical attention, access counselling, relocate, or deal with police, lawyers or the courts...;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 26 to provide employees who have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence (or whose children have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence) with up to 10 days of paid leave, reasonable unpaid leave, and options for flexible work arrangements, and to require employers to

provide mandatory workplace training about domestic violence and sexual violence.”

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it, and will give it to page Will to take to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time that we have available for petitions this afternoon.

REPORT, CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the post-event report of the Scarborough–Rouge River by-election from the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I also inform the House that another report has been tabled, a report from the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning Bob Chiarelli, member for Ottawa West–Nepean; Michael Coteau, member for Don Valley East; and Yasir Naqvi, member for Ottawa Centre.

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VISITOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m very pleased to welcome to the House a former member of this Legislature, the member for York South in the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th provincial Parliaments and Premier of the province of Ontario between 1990 and 1995, the Honourable Bob Rae. Welcome to the Legislature today.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

NANJING MASSACRE COMMEMORATIVE DAY ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DU MASSACRE DE NANJING

Ms. Wong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day / Projet de loi 79, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif du massacre de Nanjing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Wong has moved second reading of Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Soo Wong: It is an honour to rise today in the House to lead the second reading debate on my private member’s bill, Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing

Massacre Commemorative Day. If passed, this bill would designate December 13 every year as Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to acknowledge a number of my special guests who are here in the east and possibly the west gallery, as well as the visitors’ gallery up north there.

They include the Honourable Bob Rae, his wife, Arlene Perly Rae, and I believe very shortly former MP Olivia Chow; my own councillor, Jim Karygiannis; Dr. Joseph Wong, founder of ALPHA Education; Flora Chong, executive director of ALPHA Education; Dr. Sarah Kleeb, director of education at ALPHA Education; Patricia O’Reilly, board member of ALPHA Education; award-winning author, human rights activist and Order of Canada recipient Erna Paris and her husband, Tom Robinson; my good friend TDBS trustee Gerri Gershon; and I believe very shortly the principal, teachers, staff and students from Central Technical institute. Lisa Edwards and her kids are coming to join us.

Also coming shortly as well are Gordon Cressy and Joanne Campbell, and Wilson Sung, the president of the Chinese business association.

Earlier today at the reception, there were Hong Kong veterans present: Mr. Frank Yip, the chairman of the Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen’s Association, Mr. John Fung, and the vice-chairman, Mr. Chin Tam.

Also present here today are Jeanette Chu, who is the niece of Dr. Alan Joe, a survivor of the Second World War in Guangzhou.

I know there are teachers and students across the GTA watching the second reading debate today. I want to acknowledge some of them: York Region District School Board high school teacher Mr. Marr, who is the head of the history and social studies department at Bayview Secondary School; his colleague Mr. Croswell, and his grade 12 history class; and other university students—I know they’re doing their exams—at U of T, McMaster, Waterloo and Western, who are all part of ALPHA chapters.

Today is the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. This past Tuesday, the Legislature held a special tribute from all three parties to remember and honour the veterans and their families and those brave Canadians who lost their lives defending Hong Kong. As the only elected member in this Legislature born in Hong Kong, I too want to acknowledge and thank all the veterans and many military men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending Hong Kong from imperial Japan.

As I lead the second reading debate on my private member’s bill on the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day, I’d like to provide some historical context on the events of the 1930s.

On December 13, 1937, Japanese imperial forces initiated a six-week massacre in the then-capital of China, Nanking. This atrocity is often referred to as the Rape of Nanking and is one of the most horrific atrocities in modern history. More than 200,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were indiscriminately slaughtered under the command of General Iwane Matsui.

In John Pritchard and Sonia Zaide's book, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, they wrote about the slaughter. Tens of thousands of women, both young and old, were sexually assaulted in the Japanese capture of the city. Men and women, survivors and veterans, Chinese and Japanese alike, recount stories of women being dragged from hiding places and gang raped, with noncompliant women being beaten or killed. This earlier form of sexual slavery and human trafficking is noted in various history books.

Those who survived this horrific atrocity continue to suffer physically and psychologically in the reliving of those memories. They understood the need to record this history, but the numbers of survivors are dwindling and their stories are in danger of being forgotten and lost forever.

Ontario, Mr. Speaker, is the home to one of the largest Asian populations in Canada, with over 2.6 million recorded in 2011. The Asian community has contributed greatly to our province by enriching our cultural diversity socially, politically and economically through arts, work ethics and wisdoms. Almost every Asian who has emigrated to Canada over the past 40 years would have been affected by the events in Asia during the Second World War to some degree. Some Ontarians even have direct relationships with the victims and survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, yet many are unaware of the atrocities that occurred in Asia during the Second World War.

An official commemorative day of remembrance for the Nanjing Massacre offers not only an occasion to educate Ontarians about this event but also other atrocities that occurred in Asian countries during the Second World War. Ontario is recognized as a leader in an inclusive society, but inclusiveness is not possible without providing Ontarians the chance to reflect on this part of history. Increasing awareness of this event through education and commemorative events will open doors for greater discussion and deeper understanding of the causes, to ensure history does not repeat itself.

Erna Paris, an award-winning journalist and human rights activist, stated that "an Ontario calendar day to commemorate the Nanjing Massacre will bring well-deserved attention to this poorly known historical event and in doing so, serve the interests of all Ontarians."

At this point, I want to encourage all my colleagues to look in the east gallery, to the founder of ALPHA Education, Dr. Joseph Wong. Dr. Wong has been known as a fighter for social justice since 1979. Inspired by the relentless effort of the Jewish community in revealing and remembering the horror of the Jewish Holocaust, and appalled by the absence of information and knowledge about the Asia-Pacific War, he founded Toronto ALPHA in 1997 with the mandate to seek justice for the victims and to foster humanity education.

Through ALPHA Education, hundreds of students in the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board are given an opportunity to learn about the Nanjing Massacre. Furthermore, ALPHA Education

provides resources and support to teachers in these three school boards.

Recently, I had an opportunity to meet with a group of students in grade 12 at Bayview Secondary School, who told me that the school and society in general do not focus on the Second World War in the East. The students' view of the Second World War has been largely presented through a Western lens, and Asian atrocities are, largely, rarely discussed or mentioned in regular history classes.

Former president of the ALPHA chapter at U of T, St. George campus, Alissa Wang, informed me that "our education system, to this day, presents only one side of a much more complex and multidimensional history." Alissa stated, "to commemorate the Nanjing Massacre not only because it is a symbolic event in Asia's Second World War history, but also because it is a crime against humanity and thus a critical event in world history that teaches us important lessons for the present and the future."

Right before Christmas 1998, the Ontario Legislature passed MPP Ted Chudleigh's bill on a Holocaust Memorial Day, Bill 66. This bill received all-party support and is the first bill of its kind in any jurisdiction in North America. Bill 66 captures Ontario's forward-thinking and steadfast commitment to fight against discrimination, and it paved the way for an inclusive society where all Ontarians may embrace their cultural heritage without fear of retaliation.

In 2009, the Legislature passed Bill 147, which commemorates the victims of the man-made famine of Ukraine. This bill was co-sponsored by Dave Levac, MPP for Brant, along with Cheri DiNovo, MPP for Parkdale-High Park, and MPP Frank Klees, Newmarket-Aurora. It was the first tri-sponsored bill to pass in the history of Ontario. It was passed with unanimous consent from all three House leaders.

These two bills passed by the Ontario Legislature demonstrate Ontario's unified stance on human rights issues, no matter where they occurred, and their impact on Ontarians. Passing my private member's bill demonstrates that Ontario continues to be committed to acknowledging and addressing human rights issues. If passed, it will be the first legislation from any western jurisdiction that commemorates the Nanjing Massacre.

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While the Nanjing Massacre was one of the most horrific events in Asia during the Second World War, it certainly is not the only one. Neighbouring countries like Korea, Singapore and the Philippines faced similar enormities, and like the victims and survivors at Nanjing, these people's voices need to be heard as well.

Designating December 13 in each year as Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario will provide an opportunity for Ontarians, especially the Asian community, to gather, remember and honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre.

Former MP Olivia Chow joins us later today to support my bill. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Chow

and ALPHA Education championed the motion on Japanese military sexual slavery in the Second World War in the House of Commons, and it was passed unanimously on November 28, 2007. The motion called for the Japanese government to officially acknowledge the history and their war responsibilities, apologize and make necessary reparations to the victims of military sexual slavery during the Second World War in Asia.

During debate of this motion, the minister of multiculturalism and Canadian identity, the Honourable Jason Kenney, stated, "As Canadians, we acknowledge moments of injustice in our own history, but these women came to this country with a story that needs to be heard because we need to learn from the lessons of history to ensure they are not repeated."

I hope, Mr. Speaker, this Legislature follows in the federal government's footsteps, remembers the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre, and fights for human rights.

The intent of my private member's bill is to acknowledge and remember the history as it occurred in hopes of preventing similar actions in the future. This is not—I'm going to repeat, Mr. Speaker—this is not about the Japanese people in Ontario, and it's not about today, other than remembering the day and the lesson that history teaches us.

I'd like to thank all our guests who are here at Queen's Park today to witness the second reading debate on my private member's bill, and thank my colleagues in advance for their participation in this debate.

I'd like to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by sharing a statement by Mr. Neil Marr, head of history and social studies at Bayview Secondary School: "By not commemorating the event officially, it can be argued that society is not acknowledging a significant portion of our province and nation's people with Chinese heritage, which is something all the more disappointing given the unequal manner in which Chinese Canadians were treated not so many years ago."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for further debate, I wish to inform the House that I've received the list of the members who were warned this morning and I have that list for the afternoon.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks for the warning, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The warnings carry on into the afternoon.

Further debate.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you, MPP Soo Wong, for bringing this excellent bill.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today and speak to Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day. Why am I supporting this bill and why is it so significant to remember this tragic event in human history? Most people remember Hitler's Nazi Holocaust committed against the Jewish people, and people know that Japan started World War II, but they do not remember the specifics of the atrocities committed

against the Asian people by the Japanese Imperial Army. World War II has affected me personally as well.

The Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanking, was a mass-murder killing of Nanjing civilians and unarmed soldiers that happened in late 1937 to early 1938. This event occurred after the Japanese army invaded Nanjing, which was China's capital at the time.

Reports document that the Japanese Imperial Army ruthlessly massacred about 300,000 Chinese, most of them being civilians, many women and children, and also raped more than 20,000 Chinese women and girls, ranging in age from younger than 10 to older than 80. Thousands and thousands of Chinese were slaughtered using all kinds of gruesome killing methods. It was one of the most massive and inhumane massacres in the history of mankind, Mr. Speaker.

Japanese nationalists contend that the death tolls are inflated and the majority killed were resisting Japanese occupation. To this day, pages in Japanese school history textbooks deny the fact that this massacre actually took place. Because of this, we can still witness the heated protests on the streets in China. Then and now, the Nanjing Massacre remains one of the darkest events of the last century.

What does the Nanjing massacre mean to the current generation? To the average Canadian, it probably means nothing and is something they probably have never heard of before. To the average Chinese Canadian, it probably also doesn't mean very much, except that it might be something they have heard from their parents or grandparents. To the Japanese who are under 50 years old, they probably also don't know much about it.

For about 60 years, from 1937 to 1997, the overwhelming majority of the people in the world outside of China did not know much about the Nanjing Massacre and most likely had never heard of it before. It was only after Iris Chang, in 1997, published her bestselling book *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, that more people outside of China heard of the Nanjing Massacre, but it was still a very small minority.

A few months back, I read the testimony of an 87-year-old Chinese woman called Xia Shuqin. She shared her story of how she survived the Nanjing Massacre:

"It was Dec. 13, 1937. 'Around 9 or 10 a.m., the Japanese invaded our house,' Xia remembered vividly. 'My father was killed immediately after they broke in. My grandparents, my parents, my sisters, everyone was scared and crying. Seven out of nine of my family members were killed.'....

"Only Xia and her then four-year-old sister survived. 'I was stabbed three times and passed out. When I woke up, I found myself covered with blood,' Xia said with tears in her eyes.

"Her legs were trembling but she insisted to stand on the stage for the whole speech. 'I heard my sister crying and looking for our mom. But everyone else had died.'

"It was not easy for an 87-year-old to travel across the world—to the US—"but Xia made it in order to preserve her testimony, to let more people know what had happened in Nanjing in 1937."

About 15 years ago, I was working very closely with Dr. Joseph Wong—he was here this morning; maybe he's here this afternoon—the founder of ALPHA Education and the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, regarding sex slavery, the so-called comfort women, committed by the Japanese imperial military soldiers during World War II.

One evening, during that time, I saw a movie about the Nanjing Massacre in one of the downtown Toronto theatres. The movie was a story based on Iris Chang's bestselling book *The Rape of Nanking*. The movie showed so many ruthless scenes of this massacre, which I do not want to repeat in this House today, Mr. Speaker. I came home late that night, and I couldn't sleep the whole night.

Before the Nanjing Massacre took place, Japan invaded Korea on August 10, 1910. The Japanese imperial military occupied the Korean peninsula until August 15, 1945. That is 36 years. During this period, Koreans were not allowed to speak in the Korean language in public places. Korean students were punished at school when they were found speaking in Korean. Koreans were forced to change their names to Japanese names.

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Toward the end of World War II—i.e., from 1942 to the end—the Japanese military apprehended roughly 200,000 Korean women, aged from 10 to over 50. The Japanese imperial soldiers sent these women to the front line in the battlefields and forced them to become sex slaves. Every night, these women were raped by so many soldiers repeatedly. Some women had to “treat” over 30 Japanese soldiers. When some of the women got pregnant, they disappeared, and no one knew what happened to these women.

It was not just Korean women. Some of the women were kidnapped from the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

After the end of World War II, many of these so-called comfort women refused to go back to their families because they felt so ashamed.

Today, many of us were shocked when we learned that Boko Haram kidnapped hundreds of schoolgirls and used them as slaves. That's exactly what happened during World War II to tens of thousands of Asian women—for sex slavery.

The people in Japan don't know about that part of history, because the Japanese government does not want to admit that their country has inflicted such terrible and inexcusable acts toward other human beings. In their history books, this part of history is completely white-washed—unbelievable.

This part of history was also essentially not discussed in Canadian high school history courses until recently. Why don't the people of the Western world know about this part of history? I think it is a very good question to ask.

As responsible citizens of Canada, and of the world, it is our responsibility to acknowledge and commemorate the Nanjing Massacre. It is our duty to teach our future

generations the actual facts of this important part of history, and we all have to work very hard so that there's never again another Holocaust or massacre or comfort woman or Boko Haram on this planet. That is why I'm submitting this statement to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Today, I rise to support the private member's bill brought forward by the MPP for Scarborough—Agincourt to commemorate the massacre of Nanjing.

In 1937, imperial Japanese forces engaged in a brutal act of massacre and rape, targeting soldiers and civilians in the Chinese city of Nanjing over a period of six weeks. The government of China states that 300,000 people were killed.

Speaker, one of the most haunting images that comes out of the attack on Nanjing is one of an infant, maybe a year old, sitting alone, abandoned and crying on a railway platform in a bombed-out station. That image, not as gruesome as many of the others, encompasses the absolute devastation that was wreaked on that population.

The events did occur. Although remembered in China and other parts of Asia, the knowledge in the rest of the world is limited. In Japan, the reality is contested or denied by right-wing and nationalist groups.

Although we humans are not very good at learning from our history, we're even worse when we deny that history actually occurred—and for this, I want to thank the member for bringing forward the bill because this is a part of history that should not be forgotten or obscured. It is, however, contested, without a doubt.

The newspaper the *Guardian* reported a month ago that the Japanese government was withholding funds from UNESCO because of documents related to the massacre:

“Japan is holding back more than £34 million in UNESCO funding following a protest against the listing of documents related to the Nanjing Massacre....”

“Japan—one of UNESCO's biggest funders—warned last year that it might pull the funding after the UN cultural and scientific body agreed to Beijing's request to register disputed Chinese documents recording the mass murder and rape committed by Japanese troops after the fall of the Chinese city of Nanjing in 1937.”

Speaker, in my mind it is entirely clear that we need to face up to and acknowledge the reality of the brutality of the 20th century. We need to be clear about the economic chaos and the great power nationalism that was used by dictators to secure and hold power and the use to which they put that power.

If we want to help ensure that we don't repeat the mistakes and massacres of that time, then we need to first remember that they actually happened. We need to remember that assumptions of racial or national superiority lead to the very darkest nights of human experience. We need to remember that scapegoating of individual religions or ethnic groups, when mixed with explosive

anger over desperate economic circumstances, can lead to these kinds of large-scale human tragedies, these kinds of large-scale human crimes.

For the right-wing and nationalist forces in Japan that claim that the massacre never happened, it is very important that the leaders of that country know that the reality is understood, acknowledged and recognized around the world. Our taking this position limits the room for denial of the reality. And that forcing of the recognition of that reality is valuable in its own right.

For the survivors and their descendants, it's important that they're honoured and that their memory is kept alive.

For the people of Ontario, there is also the recognition that we all came here by many different ways and that our history is rooted in Asia, just as it is rooted in Europe and in Africa; that our makeup as a society has been touched by these historic events and they are as valid and real a part of us as any tragedy or crime against humanity that happened in Europe over the centuries. We are a people of many origins and it is well that we learn all the parts of our origin story.

Speaker, it's my hope that this bill passes and becomes part of our memory of history so that we can remember where humanity can go wrong and so that we will take the steps to avoid going down those pathways in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I'm very honoured and privileged to speak to this private member's bill brought forward by my good friend the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. It is a very important bill. It saddens me every time I think about December 13, 1937.

Last year, I had the privilege of visiting Nanjing for the first time in my life. Nanjing, as you know, is known as the capital of 10 dynasties. It was the political, educational and economic capital of China at the time. On last year's trip, I was a little surprised that I didn't see as many artifacts and historic sites as one would have expected, so I asked a local and they told me that it's because of World War II and what happened on December 13, 1937. It's a very dark chapter in China's history.

To confess, I have never finished a full movie that speaks to the Nanjing Massacre because I just couldn't go through the entire movie, and even sometimes a documentary. I tried a few times, but as a Chinese Canadian who was born in China, and knowing a bit of history of the Nanking Massacre, I just don't have the heart to be reminded of what happened.

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The honourable member mentioned that a few days ago we had the pleasure in this House to commemorate the Holodomor and the Battle of Hong Kong. Those are dark chapters of World War II history as well. I think we must remember the past, understand the cause and, passing on, remind our kids and the children of our children that this history must not be repeated.

This bill serves a very important purpose. If passed, it will give us another opportunity to warn ourselves that

we've got to do our best to prevent that from happening ever again.

Multiculturalism, which we all enjoy here in Canada, has bedrocks such as justice, fairness, equality and respect for all, including respect for one's history and culture.

I'd be very honoured to support this bill, and I encourage all members of this House to support this private member's bill.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to tell our visitors to the gallery that you're not allowed to applaud, but we welcome you here.

Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I wish I could say I was pleased, because it's a difficult topic today, but I'm honoured to rise today in support of Bill 79, brought forward by the member from Scarborough—Agincourt—who usually today, on a Thursday, we would see in the Speaker's chair—commemorating the Nanjing Massacre.

As somebody who put forward a motion last week on behalf of the Jewish community and others who believe that Jewish students should feel comfortable on our campuses, I'm very honoured to rise and speak on behalf of those who have advocated for many years for recognition of those who want to commemorate, and right a wrong.

We can never undo history. We all know that, those of us with relatives who died in the Holocaust during the Second World War. Very often when we talk about the Second World War, Mr. Speaker, we focus on Europe, but there were atrocities that happened in Asia as well.

We cannot bring the sins of the parents on to the children; we know that. I understand that the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre is uncomfortable with some of the discussions going on today, and I understand that, but we also need to commemorate those who lost their lives. We're hearing today about the atrocities that were perpetrated upon women specifically during the Nanjing Massacre, where for six weeks, starting on December 13, 1937, basically hundreds of thousands of civilians lost their lives and were raped repeatedly.

We want not just to commemorate the victims of atrocities, but we also want to ensure that we educate our youth to understand that human beings are capable of horrific acts, and to ensure that this does not carry on into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to support this very important bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, some people will tell you what I'm about to say is nothing but a lie. Others will tell you I'm telling the God's gospel truth. As a former journalist, I can tell you there's always three sides to a story. So what I'm about to say falls somewhere between a lie and the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Speaker, this is not a nice story. It may make you sick to your stomach. I'm not here to say this story is based on a definitive set of historical facts; that's not for me to say.

But when we go back to 1937, if it's true—if even a small bit of it is true—it should turn your stomach, and you'll never think of war in quite the same way again.

In 1937, people were different. War had damaged men. The demons of war had been unleashed. Japanese troops had an incentive for Nanking. They said that supposedly they were told they would be able to loot and rape as much as they wanted. It has even been reported that two lieutenants had a competition going. They had swords, and the race was on to see who could kill the first hundred men with nothing but a sword.

There are dozens of eyewitness accounts to what happened. It was just a terrible military disgrace. By some accounts, 20,000 women were raped; some were gang-raped. Afterwards, some of them were sliced open by bayonets. Babies were sliced open.

Reverend James McCallum wrote in his diary, where he was hiding, that a thousand women a night were taken away and raped. Some were violated in broad daylight.

Two 16-year-old girls were raped to death in the refugee camp. At the University of Nanking, 30 women were raped on the spot, some by as many as six men. At the university middle school, soldiers came in 10 times a night. They stole food, they stole clothing, and they raped until they were satisfied. One hundred young girls were raped at Ginling College. At the military college, seven girls were taken; five returned, and they had been raped six or seven times a day.

If the husbands or brothers intervened, they were shot. Some families were forced into incestuous acts. Sons were forced to rape their mothers, and fathers were forced to rape their daughters. Brutality, bestiality, mass killings, mass graves—they called one of those mass graves, Speaker, “the 10,000-corpse ditch.”

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of young Chinese men were lined up along the banks of the Yangtze River, machine-gunned and tossed into that river. Some 1,300 Chinese soldiers and civilians were tied up, then blown up with land mines and doused with gasoline and set on fire. One American missionary reported being forced to watch as a Chinese soldier was disembowelled. Japanese troops roasted his heart and liver, then ate them.

Speaker, it's not a good story. It's not something we should be telling our grandchildren about, and that's for sure. How could it have happened?

The Chinese women were undefended. Their menfolk were powerless or absent. Historians are still conflicted. Some say 40,000 were killed, some say 60,000, and others go as high as 300,000.

In May 1994, Japan's justice minister said this massacre was a fabrication. In August 1995, Japan's Prime Minister gave the first clear and formal apology for Japanese actions during the war. He apologized for Japan's aggression, and he offered his heartfelt apology to all survivors and to the relatives and friends of the victims.

I applaud the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for bringing this forward. I'm proud to stand here today in support of her private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to begin by thanking the member from Scarborough—Agincourt, Soo Wong, for bringing this act forward. On behalf of my constituents in Markham—Unionville, I'm proud to rise in the House to support Bill 79, the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act. Following me, Minister Moridi and Minister Ballard will be speaking to this bill.

In order to fully understand the importance of this bill and its premise, it's crucial that we should know the historical context of this crime.

The massacre dates back to December 13, 1937, when the Japanese Imperial Army moved into the then Chinese capital, Nanjing. Scholars and historians note that the acts of looting, burning and killing that ensued the six weeks after the initial invasion were relentless and horrifying.

The massacre was not limited to men. Both women and children were also brutalized as a result of this assault, thousands and thousands of which were humiliated through acts of sexual violence, which earned its own terrible moniker, the Rape of Nanjing.

Historians note that in 40 days, over 300,000 people were executed. The Chinese were not considered as human beings, Speaker; they were treated as numbers. This bill will reassure survivors, some of whom live in our inclusive society here in Ontario, that we stand with them and that all crimes against humanity deserve our full repudiation.

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It is important to recognize that World War II was in fact a world war. It affected North America; it affected Europe. But we cannot forget that it, too, affected Asia.

Speaker, I am proud to call myself an Ontarian because of the respect that we show to individuals of all cultures. With the hopeful passing of this bill, Ontarians will recognize and denounce the atrocities that took place between December 1937 and March 1938 in the city of Nanjing, China, so that we may prevent future brutalities and remember the hundreds of thousands of victims who were slaughtered senselessly in Nanjing. I believe that this is our duty as legislators and Ontarians: to provide our youth with the tools to reflect and educate themselves on this heinous crime against humanity.

Speaker, as a person who was born in China, this historical piece is close to my heart. I stand here today in a most sincere effort to prevent history from repeating itself.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speeches given by the various members from all sides of the House on this particular bill, and I want to echo with them the atrocity that took place from 1937 on in regard to the conflict between Japan and China.

I want to speak a little bit differently in the sense that, if we think this is just something that happened in Nanjing and this is just something that happened on the

part of the Japanese against the Chinese, we're sadly mistaken. Unfortunately, far more places across this world have seen lesser and worse things when it comes to how we as human beings treat each other. We look at what happened to the Jewish community during the Second World War and what happened to other communities during the Second World War as a result of what was inflicted on the part of the Japanese and the Germans.

But I want people to remember something: Neither the Japanese nor the Germans were uncivilized societies. The Japanese and the Germans were as cultured, as educated and as civilized as any of us here. Yet people decided to take these actions, and people who were not just at the lowest rung—the individuals who actually did the butchering and the raping—but the people at the highest levels of government. If we think that we, as Canadians, North Americans or Europeans, are isolated and it wouldn't happen to us again, we are sadly mistaken.

I think when we have occasions like this that come into the Legislature, when we talk about it, it reminds us that every day we have to fight against this. We see it today with Islamophobia in our own nation and across North America in regard to what's happening in different parts of the world. We see it when it comes to what happens with anti-Semitic actions on the part of people in our own society against Canadians who live here. I remind people that we don't have a proud history ourselves, to a certain degree, because when the Jews tried to come to Canada prior to 1939, we turned the boats away.

So I think it's important that we recognize as citizens—never mind as legislators—that when we go home and we have these conversations with friends and family at occasions at the kitchen table, at the coffee shop or wherever it might be, when we hear people perpetrating lies and hatred against other people because they are different from us, we have to pick up the torch, and we need to move forward and push it back. We have to say to people, "That is unacceptable."

This is one very small planet where we are all human beings, whatever colour, language or nationality we might be, or whatever religion it is. We owe it to each other to at least learn how to move forward over time so that we become a civilized place where all people on this planet, all people in this country and all people in this province are respected, and we respect that in law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Primo Levi, a well-known chemist, author and survivor of the Holocaust, wrote, "Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions."

Bills such as the one MPP Soo Wong has put forward today are important reminders that we do not live in a perfect world. We live in a world marked by the scars of a tumultuous history. To remember that history is to do

justice to the fallen and to safeguard the future from all forms of tyranny, oppression, racism and discrimination.

Bills like the one we're debating today remind us to renew our dedication to fight all forms of evil. It is the responsibility of the living to honour this history and those who have suffered by preventing events like this from ever occurring again.

Humanity cannot afford another Nanjing Massacre. That's why I choose to stand up today in this House and support the member from Scarborough–Agincourt and the bill she has put forward.

The commemoration of events such as these is intrinsic to this province's stance of fighting any form of oppression. I am positive that every member of this House echoes the sentiment that we will not stand for any form of oppression or discrimination.

Those who suffered from the Nanjing Massacre were denied something that should be intrinsic to all humans: humanity. They were denied the right to live as humans, peacefully and without fear of violent oppression.

Mr. Speaker, the fight is not over. Even today, these forms of oppression are in the world. I challenge all members of this House to renew their commitment to fighting oppression. This is our responsibility to those who are not with us today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I start with a quote from Robbie Burns, who in 1780 wrote, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." I think it was an early acknowledgment of mankind's propensity for evil.

It seems that it is a universal fact that atrocities like the Nanking Massacre have occurred throughout human history. Most recently, we can think of atrocities like the Holocaust, the Holodomor and the Rwandan genocide. Again, mankind's propensity for evil seems boundless.

That's why it's so important that we stand vigilant against such hateful acts fuelled by xenophobia and unbridled nationalism. We need to remember that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

While humans have the capacity for great acts of violence, we can also look at the Nanking Massacre and see some great acts of bravery. As the Japanese army approached Nanking, a small group of businessmen and missionaries formed the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone prior to the attack. The safety zone opened in November 1937. The zone consisted of more than a dozen refugee camps. It did do some good, and thankfully, survivors were able to reorganize and carry on giving aid in Nanking until 1949.

Like these individuals on the relief committee, we must stand for the fact that all human beings possess a core of inalienable universal rights. We must never forget the atrocities committed against the people of Nanking, as we cannot forget those evils committed against so many others by so many all around the world. I'm so delighted to be able to stand in support of Bill 79 and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I now return to the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her reply.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank my colleagues from Scarborough—Rouge River, Toronto—Danforth and Trinity—Spadina, the Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science, the Minister of Housing and responsible for the poverty reduction strategy, the member from Thornhill, the member from Windsor—Tecumseh and the member from Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Speaker, today this Legislature had an opportunity not just to debate my bill, Bill 79; it also encouraged each one of us, as the member from Timmins—James Bay talked about earlier. It provides Ontarians with an opportunity to remember the atrocities in Asian countries during the Second World War. It is more and more important that these events not be forgotten. The voices of the victims and their families will not be lost forever in history.

I'm going to encourage that each party take it upon themselves to move this bill forward, because next year is actually the 80th anniversary—80th anniversary—of the Nanjing Massacre. It is incumbent upon each one of us to have that responsibility to ensure that history cannot be forgotten.

I want to thank, before I leave my turn, some of my constituents who are here today, as well as my staff, because at the end of the day, I work them right to the bone. I want to thank Joanne, Stephanie, Fiona, Sam, June and my very dear intern Sheila—I know she would make a great human rights lawyer—as well as the legislative counsel who drafted my proposed bill, Bill 79, nine or 10 times. To each one of you, thank you, because through your efforts I'm here today, and we have been given an opportunity to debate on a very important part of history, the Nanjing Massacre. We as Ontario legislators have an opportunity to have that voice.

I want to remind my colleagues, as well, that Mr. Tim Hudak told us all that we have the microphone. It is a privilege, and we use that privilege wisely.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The vote on this bill will take place when we've concluded our private members' public business this afternoon.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Patrick Brown: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should stop any new tolls on existing lanes of Ontario highways, including the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Brown has moved private member's notice of motion number 38. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I'm proud to rise this afternoon in support of this motion stopping the Liberal government from establishing unaffordable road tolls on the Gardiner Expressway and the Don Valley Parkway.

Premier Wynne and the Liberal caucus have a big decision to make, because as much as they want to avoid answering questions about this, and will engage in diversion tactics, the decision to toll these roads ultimately rests with this Liberal government.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is an important decision that should not be taken lightly. This is a decision that should be made in the provincial Legislature, not in the back rooms of the Premier's office, not in quiet, secret agreements with the city of Toronto and the Premier's office. It's a decision that should be made in public, accompanied by thoughtful and thorough debate.

This isn't a decision that affects just the residents of Toronto, but the entire GTA. This is an added cost for families from across the GTHA, whose lives have already become more and more unaffordable under this Liberal government. Families are already paying among the highest energy rates in North America. Families already pay the highest tax rates in North America, taxes that have increased 20% in just five years; families who sit in gridlock day after day, only to have this government increase vehicle and driver registration fees by—hear this—\$503 million in just four years. The list goes on and on.

There isn't a fee that this government hasn't thought about raising or raised. This is a government that just can't keep their hands out of taxpayers' pockets. If the government approves these road tolls, life will become much harder for the residents of Ontario. Life will be harder for the parents who drive into Toronto for a child's doctor's appointment or a downtown hospital for surgery. Life will be harder for the father who wants to take his family downtown for a special evening or to go to a Leafs game, see a play or have dinner.

That's why I introduced this motion. I wanted to give every Liberal member the opportunity to publicly and on the record stand up for their constituents. I wanted to give every Liberal MPP the opportunity to stand up at this afternoon's vote and say, "Enough is enough. The people who sent us to Queen's Park can't afford this added tax."

To add insult to injury, commuters will pay to be stuck in traffic. Not only is there too much congestion, they're going to be paying now to be stuck in traffic because we know this will do nothing to reduce congestion on the DVP or the Gardiner Expressway.

Those who live in Toronto will see their city roads clogged with people trying to avoid the toll. City staff's—this is Toronto city staff—independent assessment reported that congestion on main city streets surrounding the DVP and the Gardiner will increase by as much as 29%. Busier, more congested Toronto streets—that's almost a third more cars on every side street, making it even more difficult to get around the city and for people in the 416 to get to work.

It's already difficult. Gridlock is already suffocating. The gridlock on Lakeshore Boulevard, the Queensway, Victoria Park, the Danforth and Kingston Road, in particular, is going to get significantly worse. That should be worrisome for every one of those communities.

I understand the desperate need to get shovels into the ground for infrastructure and transit. I sympathize with the concerns from municipal leaders that this keeps them up at night, that it's difficult to make budgets meet.

But the Liberals have been in power for 13 long years, and throughout those 13 long years, this government has continued to break their transit and infrastructure promises. The reason they've broken these infrastructure commitments is because they have wasted billions on scandal and mismanagement. As a result, Ontarians have been left to suffer in gridlock. The lack of transit—this gridlock in the GTA—speaks for itself.

For many commuters in both the 416 and the 905, the Gardiner and the DVP are the only option. Why should Ontario residents, already struggling to get by, be forced to pay yet another added tax because of the Wynne Liberal's record of negligence?

We continue to see examples of Liberal infrastructure incompetence every single day. In the 2014 provincial election, Premier Wynne promised voters the largest infrastructure investment in our province's history. The people of Ontario are still waiting. We haven't seen it. This is yet another broken promise.

In 2015, when Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the fire sale of Hydro One, she said it was for transit. She said that she had to have this fire sale of a key asset to pay for transit. Surprise, surprise—not a cent from the fire sale of Hydro One has gone to transit and infrastructure.

Interjection: Shameful. That's shameful

Mr. Patrick Brown: Shameful.

Last week's Auditor General report was an encyclopedia of Liberal failures. I know that here in the Legislature, the Liberals like to dismiss our concerns that we raise on behalf of communities across Ontario. But now you have the Auditor General, independent oversight—

Interjection: Trusted.

Mr. Patrick Brown:—trusted oversight. Here's what the Auditor General said: "We paid \$8 million for a bridge to be installed upside down, only for the government to rehire the company for another \$39-million project."

Ms. Sylvia Jones: How can that be?

Mr. Patrick Brown: How can that be? It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

They like to spin somehow that their upside-down bridge is appropriate, but it's a symbol of how negligent they have been on spending infrastructure dollars carefully—precious infrastructure dollars.

This is a government spending millions of dollars to pave roads every couple of years, instead of every 15 or so. This is a government that paid \$23 million for repairs on highways after only three years, when the highway should have lasted 15 years. Think about that: Repave them after three years; it should have been 15. Not only are you stuck in traffic and gridlock, but you're waiting for construction work that wasn't needed in the first place. You talk about a government that is asleep at the switch and how poorly they've managed our infrastructure dollars.

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The government has watched as Metrolinx piled millions in additional costs on the backs of taxpayers for often inadequate, delayed and shoddy work. Just this week, Metrolinx's self-serving Presto machines, which cost the government \$15,000 each, stopped working again. It's clear just how badly this government is spending—apologies, I shouldn't say "spending"; I should say wasting—wasting money allocated for transit and infrastructure. This is money that should be repairing infrastructure, building transit and getting shovels into the ground. Taxpayer dollars are precious, and the notion that they continue to waste and mismanage is heart-breaking for families in Ontario who want to see their taxpayer dollars spent appropriately.

Instead of forcing municipalities to look for new revenue tools—you can call it a revenue tool; it's a tax. A revenue tool is a tax. The Wynne Liberals, rather than looking at new code words to call a tax, should look at savings within how they manage infrastructure dollars. Maybe if we weren't building bridges upside down or repaving roads prematurely we wouldn't have to look at new taxes that they never campaigned on and they were actually against. The Premier, as Minister of Transportation, was against tolls. That shows how inconsistent this government has been.

Mayor Tory has, without a doubt, been put in a difficult position. He has been trying to keep the city's head above water. Municipalities have been forced to work for the scraps at this table of waste of this Liberal government. They shouldn't be put in that position. But I understand that because of the underfunding, because of the mismanagement, they don't have the resources. That's on this government's watch.

The reality is that I'm not surprised. I hope the Premier and the Liberal caucus will vote for our motion today, but I don't expect it because they have yet to meet a tax they do not like. That is their culture. They want more taxation; they want more ineffective, mismanaged government.

The Liberal caucus, though, is composed of many members from across the GTA, from suburban ridings like North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough. I think that rather than taking their cues from the Premier's office, they should listen to what their constituents are saying, because it's loud and clear: They do not want these tolls. They do not want to pay for roads that they have already paid for. They will be the ones who will be stuck in traffic. They will be the ones who have this new added cost to their life in the GTA.

That's probably the reason we're seeing so many municipal leaders stand up against this. Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie said that John Tory "has chosen to implement road tolls that will not only affect residents in his city, but those in the 905." So this provincial approval for the city of Toronto is now going to cost the people of Mississauga more.

You had Oshawa Mayor John Henry, who said, "There is just no more money left for the people. Would they support this in Oshawa? Absolutely not."

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti said, "Using road tolls to finance Toronto's transportation infrastructure places an unfair tax on the 905."

So you've got the Markham mayor, the Mississauga mayor and the Oshawa mayor all pointing out that this is a tax on the entire 905. You have business leaders in the 416 saying that this is going to make getting product to marketplace more expensive. You have families saying they can't afford this new tax.

The worry is, if this government says yes to Toronto, then, following this logic, are they not going to say yes to Mississauga, Oshawa and Markham, who all want a revenue stream? They're going to be dishonest if they say they support Toronto's request but wouldn't support another municipality. We're going to start a war of tolls, and do you know who loses, Mr. Speaker? Every single commuter in the GTA.

The sad thing about this is that while every driver pays more, while there is more gridlock because of this mistake—why are we here? This is only because of this government's mismanagement. They did not honour their 2014 election promise: The funds from the hydro fire sale did not go to infrastructure. Because they can't monitor contracts and have proper oversight, they're trying to make up for their mistake by allowing municipalities to put these big taxes on drivers. It's not right.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, think of the families who are already feeling the pinch. Think of the infrastructure and transit promises that this Liberal government has broken. I urge the Liberal members to do the right thing: to stand up for affordability in Toronto, to show they are listening and to say no to tolls in TO. That's the right thing to do. Stand up for the people of Toronto. Stand up for the people throughout the 905. It's the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, first off, I want to say that New Democrats will be voting in favour of this motion, because we, too, believe that citizens back home, our friends and our neighbours, are being squeezed. But I'm going to say a pox on the Liberal house and a pox on the Tory house. Let me tell you why.

There used to be a time, in this place we call Ontario, that 50% of transit costs were paid by the province of Ontario. Who is it that got rid of that 50%, Mr. Speaker? I remember, because I was here: It was the Conservatives, as a government, who took away the 50% that we were paying, as a province, in order to maintain transit, not just in Toronto but across this province.

And who was the government that decided they were going to download municipal roads onto municipalities, Mr. Speaker? It was the Conservative government, which means to say that costs at the municipal level went up at the same time that they didn't have the revenue to cover them. And you wonder why a Conservative by the name of Mr. Tory says that he's got to do tolls? He's wrong, but it's that the Conservatives and the Liberals have put the municipal governments of this province into a fix. On

the one hand, we've downloaded onto municipalities all kinds of costs when it comes to municipal services—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the honourable member for Timmins—James Bay. I would ask the House to come to order, please, so that I can hear him.

The member for Timmins—James Bay has the floor.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm trying as best as possible to keep my voice decibels up.

I will just say that municipalities are put in a tough spot. Why? Because Conservative governments and Liberal governments have not been a friend to municipalities. We have downloaded services and we've downloaded costs onto the municipalities. Then you wonder why a conservative mayor in Toronto says, "I need permission from a Liberal government in Toronto to put tolls"? I say a pox on both their houses.

You've got the Liberals on the other side who are just as guilty. I remember—because I was here on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker—when I was first elected in 1990, we used to pay 50% of the cost of transit in this province. We used to pay capital costs, part of it, when it came to transit equipment. We used to pay for municipal roads; they were provincial highways back then. We had services that we, the province, maintained and didn't download onto the municipalities.

The Liberals in opposition—my God, if you closed your eyes and you listened to them, you thought they had to be New Democrats, because they were yelling on this side of the House when the Conservatives went to the government side, when they started undoing the things that had been a long-established way of doing things in the province of Ontario. And what do they do, the Liberals, when they get to the government side of the House? Do they upload 50% of the cost of transit back to the province? No, Mr. Speaker, they didn't.

Did they then say, "We're going to take back all of those thousands of miles of provincial highways we've downloaded onto municipalities"? No, Mr. Speaker. If anything, they did worse: They privatized the rest of the winter road maintenance. They privatized the rest of MTO when it comes to engineering. Now we pay more and we get less. So I say a pox on both their houses.

The other point I want to make, which I think is an important one, is that you've got the Conservatives, who go around the province saying, "We can't get in the way of municipalities to make their own decisions," and the provincial government shouldn't stand in the way and dictate to the local level of government what it is they can and can't do when it comes to providing services in their province. Well, you can't have it both ways. I would agree that we shouldn't allow tolls in the province of Ontario, but you can't say, on the one hand, as Conservatives, "We don't believe that we should stand in the way of municipalities," but then go and chastise the Liberals for doing exactly what you're telling them they should do in the first place.

I find that a little bit ironic, that the Conservatives are taking this position.

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If we are in the spot today that a municipality like Toronto or Mississauga or whomever feels that they've got to put tolls on highways, it's because we started that long, slippery slope of off-loading the responsibility from the federal and provincial governments to maintain transit and to do the things that have to be done in transportation—and we've off-loaded them onto municipalities. We should not be surprised that municipalities are pinched and trying to find a way to pay the bills and to do what needs to be done.

We are the only G7 nation in the world that doesn't support inter-urban transit and inner-city transit in the way that is done normally in other parts of the world.

So I say to my Conservative friends and I say to my Liberal friends: If we want to fix this, what we need to do, as senior levels of government, is to take responsibility for what should be part of our responsibility. That's why Andrea Horwath and New Democrats, in the last election, said that we would upload 50% of the operational costs of transit in order to be able to give municipalities the room that they need to be able to run transit in their municipalities in a way that makes some sense.

I'm sure other members from my caucus would love to join in on this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, today's motion is a clear statement on where we stand, as Ontario PCs, on the issue of road tolls—a stand that is as consistent as it is principled in its call for the government of Ontario to stop any new tolls on existing lanes of Ontario highways.

When the Minister of Transportation unveiled his HOT lane bling last year, he became the only minister in the history of this province to make motorists pay twice for the privilege of driving on our own existing roads. At that time, I warned Ontario motorists that while it may be the QEW today, we all know we'll be seeing tolls coming to a highway near you, as the minister pushes his latest revenue tool down our roads. And here we go—the QEW, the Gardiner, the DVP. If the Liberals get their way, 905 and 416 residents will be immersed in an all-out offensive toll war, where roads we've already paid for are turned into cash machines funded on the backs of motorists. It's called highway robbery, and we're calling on members of the other side of the House to join us in putting a stop to it.

We all know what's behind Liberal tolling plans: 13 years of massive waste and an infrastructure deficit that grows as the government spends more on mismanagement and scandal, meaning less for transportation needs. Instead of making an effort to stop the waste to help meet transit needs, this government simply throws up its hands and turns to the already taxed-off motorists to pay their bills.

Motorists already pay vehicle taxes, Drive Clean fees and the gas tax every day they pull up to the pump. So what's another tax, another toll, another fee? Well, it may

be touted as \$2 a ride, but for the average worker who has no choice but to drive the DVP or Gardiner, it will mean a \$1,000 pay cut—\$1,000 a year for the privilege of trying to get to work on roads they've already paid for.

What makes it worse is the fact that the Conference Board of Canada has told us that GTHA motorists already pay 100% of area road costs. New road tolls on the Gardiner and the DVP would mean they'd be paying more than 100%—sounds like Liberal economics to me. They also go on to say, as well as our friends over at the CAA, due to a recent report that indicates that policy-makers have many tools at hand to make road pricing a last resort—the last resort, as opposed to the first.

In a government wading in waste and costly mismanagement, the first priority to find needed infrastructure dollars should be cutting the waste and delivering it to the priorities we all share. Speaker, you don't have to be a mathematician to figure out that the billions being wasted add up to the needed road funding that tolls are supposed to be directed at. Heck, there are millions that the auditor just revealed in her report last week: \$8 million in bonuses to companies paving our roads, despite evidence of falsified test samples; \$23 million for highway road repairs after three years, on roads that should have lasted 15; a \$39-million contract for a company that built a bridge upside down. Again, as I noted, it doesn't take a math whiz to see how these numbers add up.

That's just this year's auditor's report—just scratching the surface, of course. Last year, the auditor highlighted that the Union Station train shed that had gone \$50 million above estimates, that much-delayed Burlington GO expansion that had exceeded its budget by \$5 million, and, of course, the subsidized UP ghost express. The list goes on. I haven't even mentioned the biggies: a billion for eHealth and another for non-existent gas plants.

So when it comes to today's vote, the Liberal members have a telling choice to make. They can publicly stand up for the best interests of their constituents, for affordability and say no to tolls, or they can defend a tax-and-spend-and-spend-and-spend Premier. From where I'm standing, it looks like a pretty easy choice: “no” to TO tolls.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you to the member for the opportunity to speak to this motion, which states, “That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should stop any new tolls on existing lanes of Ontario highways, including the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway.” This is an issue that is extremely important to my community in Oshawa, so I appreciate the opportunity to rise on their behalf today.

Across Ontario, we have had and continue to have concerns about affordability in this province. People are struggling to make ends meet, to pay their rising hydro bills and to put food on the table. In the Durham region, about 30% of all workers commute into Toronto each and every day. Not only does this put a strain on their

schedules, as the average travel time to get to work is about 65 minutes, but it puts a strain on their budgets too. For the drivers, between gas, upkeep and wear and tear on their vehicles, the costs keep growing. And when you are commuting for over two hours a day in Ontario, snow tires become a necessity—and a cost—for your safety. But this is the reality for thousands of people in my riding and tens, if not hundreds, of thousands across the Durham region. These are people that have been forced to leave our community to find work because the jobs just aren't there. That is the reality under this Liberal government. It is this reality that is facing Ontarians across the province.

Now we are discussing whether people in my community can afford to pay more. We are discussing whether the families that are fighting to pay their hydro bills every month just to keep the lights on at home can afford to spend more to get to their jobs in the first place. We're debating the wrong thing. This shouldn't be just about how much more the poor or working people in our communities are going to have to pay to take the bus or drive on roads. We should be focusing on what this government is prepared to do to make transit options more accessible to all Ontarians.

Right now, the city of Toronto is desperately looking for ways to pay for transit because the province has left them high and dry. Historically, the province used to match the city dollar for dollar on what it invested in transit, but that isn't happening under this government. If it were happening, it would put more money into transit than what road tolls are projected to do. Let me just say that again: If the province simply matched the city's transit spending like it used to, we would see \$279 million invested in transit instead of the \$200 million that will come from road tolls on the backs of commuters from my community.

The reason that municipalities are under pressure is because this government has abandoned them. For the past two decades, the Conservative and Liberal governments have cut taxes for wealthy people and corporations and have increased taxes for everybody else. Instead of investing in Ontario, this government has shifted the burden onto us, and my community is feeling the impact.

This is yet another example of the deception this government has attempted against the people of Ontario. They've told us that they are progressive, that they care about people, but again and again, they have put private interest above the public. Again, they have made bad choices and left us holding the bills. Again, their problems are ours, and not the other way around.

Ontarians across the province are worried about how they will pay their bills, how they'll put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. They're worried about getting their kids to school and getting themselves to work—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Excuse me, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would caution the member on her language. We obviously want to ensure that the language is fully parliamentary.

I would ask the member to continue.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker. The government doesn't seem worried, because they're not worrying about any of this. For them, it is out of sight and out of mind. Their concerns are not our concerns. They are focused on one thing and one thing only, and that is themselves. This chamber is where we are meant to debate matters of public interest, but this government seems to care less and less about the public every day. It's why our hydro bills have gone up, why our hospital budgets are being cut and why they don't mind shifting the burden of building transit onto us.

I hear from constituents every day that they are struggling, but this government continues to act like that message hasn't reached them. It is astounding that they continue to behave this way, and Ontarians are fed up, period.

It's time for this government to put the interests of Ontarians first. On behalf of my constituents in Oshawa and across the Durham region, I call on this government to stop downloading costs onto municipalities and onto Ontarians, and to start investing in our communities instead. Transit and mobility are a shared public interest that benefit us all, and I demand, on behalf of my community, that the government starts adequately funding regional transportation for the good of all our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to speak to this non-motion before us today. I would say that this reminds me a lot of a TV show called *Seinfeld*, a show about nothing. Speaker, this is a motion about nothing. I can't support this motion because I don't have any information in front of me about what's at stake, what the tolls are. There's no plan in front of us. I cannot support this motion. I know what I'm going to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Maybe I should remind the House that if no one stands up, the debate collapses. Further debate? Further debate?

The House is suspended until 3:20.

The House suspended proceedings from 1502 to 1520.

JONATHAN'S LAW (EMPLOYEE LEAVE OF ABSENCE WHEN CHILD DIES), 2016

LOI JONATHAN DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ DES EMPLOYÉS EN CAS DE DÉCÈS D'UN ENFANT

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to entitle an employee whose child has died to a leave of absence / *Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi pour donner aux employés dont l'enfant est décédé le droit à un congé.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, before I talk about the bill before us, I want to recognize Vince and Espy Leitaó, who are the parents of Jonathan, the young man who this bill is named after.

There are many things that we don't want to think about in our daily lives, and one of those is dying. We don't want to think about it. But even more difficult to think about is the loss of a child.

However, it does happen. We do have to think about it. We have to think about the parents, and we have to think about the sisters and brothers of the children we've lost. We have to think about those who remain and the emotional burden that they carry. We have to think about what we as a society can do to help, because—and let us be very clear about this, Speaker—we can't simply abandon people.

The bill before us is not a complicated one. The bill amends the Employment Standards Act, 2000, to provide that an employee who has been employed by his or her employer for at least six consecutive months is entitled to a leave of absence, without pay, of up to 52 weeks if a child of the employee dies. In effect, it gives grieving parents the ability to take time from work without the additional fear that they could lose their jobs.

I was first approached about this bill by one of my constituents, Meghan Ferris-Miles, who had lost her three-year-old son. In an email to me, she set out the situation very clearly and made the suggestion that I come forward with this bill. I'll just quote her:

"I've spent some time with many parents who have also suffered the tragedy of losing a child, and one of the things that binds us together is the struggle with balancing work and grief as we adjust to our new normal. One of the parents that I have met is seeking to implement changes to the Employment Standards Act to provide a 52-week leave of absence for bereaved parents. His name is Vince Leitaó, and he has lost his teenage son, Jonathan, to cancer a little over one year ago.

"As you know, there's currently a critical illness leave whereby parents can take up to 37 weeks off work to care for an ill child. There is also a leave of up to 104 weeks available to parents that lose a child as a result of a crime. However, there is a huge gap for parents whose children have a terminal illness or fatal injury. In these cases, parents are only eligible for up to 10 days of personal emergency leave. Then they're left to the mercy of short-term disability plans or the benevolence of their employers.

"It's absurd that the law recognizes the need for a parent to be with their child as they face a critical illness, but then, upon the child's death, they're expected to return to work almost immediately. Similarly, it does not make sense that the law provides up to 52 weeks for maternity and parental leave to facilitate the bond between parent and child, but when the natural order of life is turned upside-down and a child dies, there is no similar leave."

Meaghan set it out clearly and plainly. The emotional impact of this is difficult to comprehend. When I was

preparing to speak to this issue, I found that I had to hold myself in emotionally, because if you go too deeply into this, it is extraordinarily difficult to manage. But I think about those parents who are dealing with the unthinkable—the state of shock, the state of loss that they're going through, and the fact that not only are they dealing with that loss and that shock, but that they have to think about how they will continue at work and how they will be productive, when, frankly, even thinking things through clearly in that state of mind is extraordinarily difficult. It's easy to understand that a person would not be social, let alone productive, for months after the loss.

Now, Mr. Leitaó worked with a lawyer at SickKids hospital to do a first draft of this bill and sent along a more academic but still moving explanation of what is at stake and what is under consideration. I'm going to quote because I don't think I can put it any more clearly:

"The death of a child is one of the most painful events that an adult can experience and is linked to complicated and traumatic grief reactions. For parents, the death can result in severe anxiety and other negative emotions associated with loss. For most parents, the child's death precipitates a severe crisis of meaning as the death represented an unnatural departure from the order of life's events. The time course for parental grief is uncertain and can be expected to show great variability. Research suggests that, to the extent one can identify a typical timeline of grief, it begins with shock and intense grief for two weeks, followed by two months of strong grieving, and then a slow recovery that takes about two years. However, recovery does not mean closure, nor an end to grieving.

"Many of these parents do not feel they are emotionally, mentally and perhaps physically ready to return to the workplace. They may not feel they are able to function effectively, or they may not feel prepared to face questions or even sympathy from those who have not suffered such a loss. For many parents the only solace is in associating with those who have suffered a similar loss, especially in the first months following death."

I want to say to you in this chamber that when a parent goes through a loss like this, they absolutely must have time to heal. Unfortunately, what's currently on offer is not adequate. I will continue the quote from that communication I was reading:

"The Employment Standards Act S.O.2000, c.41 provides statutory protective leaves of absence for parents whose child dies as a result of a crime for up to 104 weeks and leave up to 52 weeks for parents whose child has disappeared" and it is probable that the disappearance was linked to a crime.

"However, for parents whose child dies as a result of a traumatic event such as an accident, or suicide, or as a result of a sudden or prolonged illness, the grief is no less palpable, and the death may be as unexpected and even if expected, as impossible to prepare for emotionally. Yet for these parents there is no such statutory protection for leave from the workplace in order to grieve.

"Their grief is deeply discounted under the" Employment Standards Act. "It is expected that they may take 10

personal emergency days” under the act “and then return to work. If they do not feel they are ready they must make show that they qualify for medical leave; in other words, they must pathologize their response to their loss in order to show that it meets a standard of mental disorder. Alternately, they may have to file a human rights complaint on the basis of family status. Once again, they must justify their inability to work, and prove their employer’s duty to accommodate them.

“Adding insult to already grievous injury under the” Employment Standards Act, “parents who have been granted time off under the critically ill children leave must immediately end the leave on the death of their child....

“The Employment Standards Act needs to be amended so as to allow parents whose children have died, and it is not a result of their own criminal act, 52 weeks protected leave under the Employment Standards Act. This is both equitable and compassionate.

“The numbers are not sufficiently large to pose an unfair burden on employers. The Paediatric Death Review Committee cites that the average number of child deaths in the province of Ontario between 2005 and 2011 is 1,122.”

Speaker, you need to know that this bill is supported by Bereaved Families of Ontario, who wrote us a letter of support last year. I will read from the letter from Carolyn Baltaz, board chair of Bereaved Families of Ontario.

“It is my pleasure to write a letter on behalf of Bereaved Families of Ontario and our 11 affiliates in support of the proposed Jonathan’s Law ... brought before the Legislative Assembly.

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“We are a not-for-profit, charitable organization that offers peer-to-peer grief support to bereaved parents when they experience the death of a child at any age. We believe grief support helps bereaved parents feel less isolated and better equipped to deal with everyday life in regard to relationships, returning to work and their mental and physical health.

“Grieving is hard work for both the mind and body and we know the journey bereaved parents take after suffering the death of their child is a long and winding road. Parents returning to work while still in the initial shock of their child’s death adds many layers to their grief. We support this initiative as we believe the protected time offered under this bill will help our parents return to their communities productive and engaged.”

I have a clear memory of the first parent I knew who had lost a child. I was in my mid-20s. Jennifer’s son, aged eight, had died from leukemia. Her son was a little red-headed guy with tremendous energy, the kind of kid who seemed unstoppable. Jennifer was a strong woman, a single mom.

I remember walking down Bain Avenue in my riding. It was a cold day. It was late March. Jennifer was out in her front yard, digging up the flower bed. This was a week after her son had died. She was preparing for the return of the sun, the return of life to our community, to

her home. That day was cold and it was raw. I remember stopping to commiserate with her, and at the time—and even decades later—I was struck first by the extraordinary and intense grief that she was grappling with. I was also struck by her resolve, equally strong, to prepare for the return of life.

I say to you, Speaker, that we need to help all those parents who have suffered a great blow and are now preparing for life to come back. We need to change the law so they can collect themselves, rebuild their strength and fully reengage with life.

Obviously, I will ask everyone present in this chamber to vote for this bill, but I also ask the government to use its power to either move this bill forward through committee and to third reading or bring in its own legislation. I am not picky; I just want to make sure that parents who deal with this have the full support of society and the opportunity to heal themselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I’m pleased to rise to speak to Bill 31, Jonathan’s Law, brought forward by the MPP for Toronto–Danforth. As the member has said, it’s not in the natural order of things for a child to die before a parent. There’s certainly something extremely tragic about having to cremate or bury your own child.

It’s interesting that this debate comes up today, because every couple of weeks, I try to FaceTime my grandmother, who is 91 years old. She has a grade 3 education. She was born in a small village to underprivileged parents, but she married well, just one of those things. Life, overall—if you looked at it from a financial point of view, she did quite well.

I was just talking to her, and I enjoy talking to her because I learn so many life lessons. She had five children, I have to say, and she is 91 years old. I was just saying, “You’ve had a good life by all measures—a happy marriage, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren.” She said, “No, because I’ve seen four of my children die before me.” The most recent one was in August. He was 71 years old. She is 91.

I guess when you live long, you do tend to see people die. It’s particularly tragic when you lose children who are very young, but at any age, to see your own children die before you is very, very sad. When she told me that, she started to cry at that point. So, certainly, this bill hits home for me. I support the intent of the bill.

I also want to recognize Jonathan’s parents, who are here. It’s extremely brave of you to be here, because I know it’s not easy; it’s very painful for you to be here—painful for anybody in this Legislature who has seen a loved one pass away.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that our government, as you know, has introduced three new leaves for parents which have come into effect. These leaves help to ensure that caregivers can focus on what matters most: providing care to their loved ones without fear of losing their jobs.

If there are other ways that we can continue to strengthen our leaves legislation, we’re always happy to

take those suggestion. This debate is important, to hear some of these ideas. Our government, as we all know, has been conducting a review of our employment laws through the Changing Workplaces Review. The special advisers have met with over 200 groups during public meetings and received close to 300 written submissions. The consultations, which have now concluded, considered how the Labour Relations Act, 1995, and the Employment Standards Act, 2000, could be amended to better protect workers while supporting businesses in the new world of work. We look forward to their final report and recommendations and to building on all of the suggestions that come up from this debate here today.

It's certainly a very worthy cause that the member from Toronto–Danforth has raised. I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to speak to this bill. I applaud him for bringing it forward and look forward to further deliberations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise on behalf of my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry to speak on Bill 31.

I look at the bill. I don't think there's anything worse than losing a child. I know that my own mother lost two children, one before I was born, around 1947. Years later, it would still come back and she would talk about some of the—not a lot about it, but some of the other things that happened at that time that really highlighted just how, after 40 or 50 years, you never get over it. She was about two at the time, and it was in a farming accident.

Much later, in the early 1980s, my young brother, just a year younger than I was, was killed in a car accident. That's the only time I ever saw my dad—he was so upset with it. It was tough on the family. In this case, my mom was the strong one. They were close. It's hard to get over that.

At the time, I was working in Sudbury. I would have to not say I was coming home at night because I used to travel home most weekends from Sudbury, an eight- or nine-hour drive, or a seven-and-a-half-hour drive. I realized that they wouldn't be able to sleep till I got home. We were not a family that would make a trip right home at the time, so it might be fairly late. I'd have to not say I was coming home just because of the issues.

It's hard to get over that, for sure. Having our own children today—it's your worst nightmare.

My two first cousins, just a couple of years apart, same thing: two farming accidents. It was extremely hard on the family. I always remember that my first cousin was a priest, Father Kevin O'Brien. At my uncle's funeral, he was talking about when Ray's son Kevin died. Ray and Katherine were quite religious. His comment, when talking to him, was, "I think of how lucky I was to have him for 19 years," and at that point, Father Kevin broke down. He said it was tough to believe that people could have that much faith.

When you looked at how it affected the family and the first cousins, you could see the parents' pain. Unfortun-

ately, a close friend of mine lost a son in an accident this spring. The community rallied. The high school got together to raise a bursary. It's getting on to be seven or eight months later, and it's still—it's something you never get over. Really, I can see the impact on trying to get to work. It's so hard.

I have to support this. Some people can get through this quite easily, but I would say that for most people, you just don't. You can go to work and you can go through the motions, but it impacts everything you do. There's that time you really have to have to be able to pull back from things. Any amount of conversation and telling people that they only have to work through it just doesn't work. It takes time.

1540

A year seems like a long time, but really, with a loss it just isn't a long time. As you get close to people who have been impacted, even myself with a brother, you still think back. We were fairly close, a year apart, we went to school together and we did a lot of things together. As a parent it's much different. I just can't imagine the trouble.

Today, we're a little better. We have a lot more professionals who might help people through it, but it takes more than that. It takes the time. I certainly support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you to my colleague the member from Toronto–Danforth for the opportunity to speak to Bill 31, which is also known as Jonathan's Law, named in memory of Jonathan Leitaio. I would like to also welcome his parents Vince and Espy here today to the Legislature.

As noted in the explanatory note, the bill amends the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide that an employee who has been employed by his or her employer for at least six consecutive months is entitled to a leave of absence without pay of up to 52 weeks if a child of the employee dies.

Anytime a parent loses a child it is an unimaginable tragedy, and this bill would give grieving parents the ability to take time off from work to adjust to their loss and their lives without the fear of losing their job as well. This is a bill that can have a real impact on the lives of Ontarians who have experienced incredible loss, and I want to commend the member from Toronto–Danforth for bringing this legislation forward on behalf of his constituents.

As we know, this bill is inspired by the loss his constituents Vince and Espy Leitaio have experienced by the passing of their son Jonathan, who succumbed to cancer at age 15. The bill would address the challenges that they and other grieving parents have experienced first-hand and, of course, is named in his honour.

It is always a privilege when we have the opportunity to address the real problems that our constituents have experienced while we in the chamber. I want to offer my condolences and my thanks to his parents and all of the parents who have experienced such tragedy yet taken the

time to spearhead this bill to protect others. Thank you. And to other parents, thank you.

Currently, section 49 of the Employment Standards Act limits the right of employees who are parents to take unpaid leave to only if a child dies as a result of crime—limited to 104 weeks—or if the child has disappeared and crime is suspected as the cause of the disappearance—limited to 52 weeks. However, if a child dies as a result of an accident, suicide or illness, there is no similar statutory protection to allow employees the time needed to help process and deal with grief. This is astounding.

While the ESA does allow for time off to care for sick children under its critically ill children leave provision, parents are required to immediately end the leave and return to work once the child dies. This strikes me as incredibly callous and unreasonable. The death of a child is a traumatic experience for parents regardless of cause, and while the grieving process is different for each parent and something that one would never truly get over, parental bereavement studies have shown that time off is desperately needed.

Instead of acknowledging and understanding the trauma caused by the loss of a child, under the current system parents are often forced to prove their qualifications for other types of medical leave or look to protections under human rights legislation in order to protect their jobs while they deal with the loss of a child. This is putting unnecessary and unreasonable burden on those who are already consumed by loss.

This is a personal bill. We can imagine the pain and we can imagine this on a personal level because all of us are members of families. I don't have children, but I am a member of a family that was forever changed when we lost my mom. It took well over a year for us just to figure out who we were going to be as a family and what that new family was going to look like with someone missing. I could not imagine what that would be for a parent.

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you. Don't encourage me with Kleenex.

But all families can imagine the pain of loss because most families have experienced the pain of loss, and to figure out how to move forward is an unimaginable hurdle for any family. But to imagine this for parents, anything that we can do to support them in that time, we should do. Here we are; we've identified a way to support and to alleviate some of the distress. I think it's important and imperative that we do that.

I would also like to take the time to reiterate that Bereaved Families of Ontario is supportive of this bill, as we've heard. I'm going to quote them again:

"Grieving is hard work for both the mind and body and we know that the journey bereaved parents take after suffering the death of their child is a long and winding road. Parents returning to work while still in the initial shock of their child's death adds many layers to their grief. We support this initiative as we believe the protected time offered under this bill will help our parents return to their communities productive and engaged."

I've said before that as MPPs, while we spend a great deal of time speaking, our true duty to our communities is to listen. We are not experts in all things, we have not endured all things, but we need to know how to listen to those who have. This bill addresses a problem that is affecting Ontarians who have already experienced suffering beyond our comprehension, and we need to listen to them today.

To be honest, I was surprised to learn that in Ontario in 2016, this is still the reality. With that in mind, I will be supporting this bill today and I hope that members from all three parties will, as well.

This is a bill that can have a real impact on the lives of Ontarians who have experienced incredible loss, and I want to commend, again, the member from Toronto—Danforth for bringing this legislation forward. Any time a parent loses a child, it is an unbearable tragedy. This bill would give grieving parents the ability to take time off from work to adjust to their loss and their lives without the fear of losing their jobs. Today, I am very proud to offer my support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I am pleased to recognize the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: It's really a sobering pleasure to rise today on this very important conversation. I want to congratulate the member opposite from Toronto—Danforth, to welcome the Leitao family to Queen's Park and thank them for their decision to turn horrific grief into something incredibly important, and to honour the member opposite for channelling that grief in a very positive way. Thank you. Thank you for being here. It is a hard time for you, I'm sure. There are many things that remind us of these losses that we never asked for and never thought would happen, and here you are today. Thank you.

I am happy to join the Minister without Portfolio and responsible for seniors affairs, the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and the member for Oshawa, who all had some very compelling remarks. Like the member for Oshawa, I have no children but, like everyone in this chamber, I've experienced loss in my life. I want to touch on that for a moment by way of expressing empathy for this motion today, which I heartily support and which I think is so very important.

Speaker, the members of this House will know that I lost my husband, who was aged 44. But he had parents and he was a son, and I know what they went through. In a terribly sad way—I was there with them—also because they've lost a daughter. They had three children, and they lost two of them. They lost their first child at a very young age due to a health emergency. Ironically, she died at the same hospital as my husband did, which deepened their sad and tragic loss. She was only a year and a half. She was rushed into emergency and she died very suddenly and tragically. Jean and George, my late husband's parents, were young parents. They had three children. They were both under the age of 25. For them to try to pick up their lives and pick up the pieces of that after having lost a child so suddenly and tragically, and then to lose another child on top of that, was, as so many people

have said today, something that's outside the natural order of things—I know what that did to them and I know what it did to our family. So I think this is such a timely and important conversation.

I also lost a sister, at the age of 42. My mom lost her husband and then her child within 18 months of each other. Again, there was another loss of a child—outside the parameters of the member opposite's bill, because these were older children, but I think a loss of a child, like the loss of a parent or someone you love, no matter what the age is, is a sudden and tragic loss. The loss of a child, in particular, is very, very difficult.

1550

I am pleased to see that Bereaved Families of Ontario, though not surprisingly, is supportive of this, because they would understand, like so many organizations that help bereaved families do, that the stress that families experience when they lose a child so quickly is so incredible and so overwhelming. You feel like you are in a fog. People have talked about it.

That's certainly how I felt after I lost my husband. I had to stop working—I couldn't work. So if I had to stop working, I can only imagine what it is like to be a parent and try to pick up the pieces, try to go back to work and try to cope. To have this kind of legislation and that comfort of knowing that you have a job to go back to is just an important, important issue for all of us to remember. It allows you the comfort to work—because when you go back to work and you've had that kind of life-changing event, you're not at full capacity. You're just not.

There is a moral imperative for this legislation, but there's an economic one, too, if I may cite some statistics I found in researching this topic today. There is an institute in California called the Grief Recovery Institute Educational Foundation, and they talk about the economic costs of loss and grief in the workplace. They have estimated it at a stunning \$75 billion. They talk about that in the context of—I'll quote them. They say, "Measuring emotional pain, of course, is far from an exact science." I think that's right, because grief can remain hidden. Reducing the cost of grief, by understanding that workers will need support beyond the usual three to four days, really is in an employer's interest. So while this is incredibly important from an empathetic point of view, it's also an economic issue, too. That's why I applaud the member opposite for bringing this private member's bill forward.

When you think of the amount of time we spend at work, it's important to realize and understand that it's impractical to suggest that people can go back to work and sometimes shelve their emotions and put them in a closet or on a shelf for eight to 10 hours while they try to concentrate. I think that's almost an impossible task, and we shouldn't be asking them to do that. It's far too hard on them. I think that employers, especially those that have EAPs, employee assistance programs—and so many of them do—understand that employees need support when they've had this kind of dramatic and often sudden loss.

In closing, I want to again salute the Leitaos for their advocacy and for taking their loss into something important, and for sharing it so publicly with all of us. It's very, very difficult to do. Time really is the best healer, and that's what this bill is about. It's a pleasure to stand in this House and speak to something so terribly important. I thank again the member opposite for tabling this bill and for allowing us to have this important debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. I want to thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for bringing this motion forward. I have had the opportunity to speak to him, as well as to the Minister of Labour, about this legislation.

I'll tell you why it's so important to me. There are four names that have guided my career here at Queen's Park: Jamie Hubble, who took his own life when he was bullied; Eric Leighton, who died tragically at school while in shop class; Rowan Stringer, who died after sustaining multiple concussions; and Teagan Batstone, who would have been 10 this year, and who, two years ago this week, was murdered by her mother. All four of their families came to see me over the time I have been here at Queen's Park, and I've championed their issues: anti-bullying, a special inquest into Eric's death, Rowan's Law on concussions and the children's bill of rights for Teagan. It's a small thing I can do for their moms and dads. But I have never seen more strong people than those parents who have lost their children and continue to live for child advocacy, and, these people—oh, my gosh—they have.

I met with them a little over four or five months ago about this bill. They had concerns and questions, and they supported it. We talked about the fact that for many of these families it's not the first year that's the toughest, sometimes it's the second. We talked about how sometimes you have very generous employers out there that are going to give great flexibility. They want to make sure, if this is in law, that that flexibility still remains—but it makes sure that there are certain standards for others.

I am so pleased to support this bill and to give recognition to the mothers and fathers out there who don't have the same joy that I do. When I go home this evening, I'm going to give Victoria a big hug and a kiss, as I do every Thursday. My friends—the Hubbles, the Leightons, the Stringers and the Batstones—don't have that. Coming up to Christmas, it is going to be very hard for all of them to get through what the rest of us are doing, which is celebrating, when a very important piece of them won't be with them. When we recognize in this assembly that we can do more, I think it's a bit of comfort.

When I was 14 years old, one of my friends lost her brother. He was killed in a car accident. Two years later, her other brother committed suicide. The strongest woman I have ever met is a woman named Mary Priest in the town of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, because she's still standing after losing two sons.

One thing we can do here is to give them a little bit of light, a little bit of recognition. I'm going to close with this, which I just saw on Kathleen Stringer's Facebook today: "My child died. I don't need advice. All I need is for you to gently close your mouth, open wide your heart and walk with me until I can see colour again."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a real privilege for me to stand here today and participate in this very meaningful and moving debate that we are having in this place.

I want to commend my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth for bringing forward this bill. I also want to commend all of the MPPs who have spoken to the bill to this point in the debate, who have nodded and recognized the significance of the debate that we are having.

I also want to pay tribute to Jonathan's parents, Vince and Espy Leita, who are here with us today, who somehow found the extraordinary strength and courage to take the grief that they were experiencing and to move forward to do something good for other people. They worked with my colleague the member for Toronto–Danforth and that is the reason we have the bill before us today.

I was really struck by the preamble of this bill, and I want to read it into the record because it is very, very powerful and it speaks directly to the discussion we are having:

"The journey bereaved parents take after suffering the death of their child is a long and winding road. Grieving is hard work for both the mind and body. Parents may feel isolated and unable to deal with everyday life. Balancing work and grief can be overwhelming for parents; returning to work while still in the initial shock of their child's death may add many layers to their grief.

"To help these parents return to their communities productive and engaged, it is critical to ensure they have time to grieve."

That is what this bill does. It allows parents time to deal with the tragic, the unnatural loss of losing a child. The pain that they experience is unimaginable to those of us who have children ourselves, to those of us who don't have children.

I want to again commend Vince and Espy for the work that they have done, the advocacy that they have engaged in to bring this bill to this point today. We need this kind of legislation in the province. We need it to ensure that we are caring for our workers, that we are caring for our families, that we are caring for our citizens who are facing some of the most difficult, emotionally draining and traumatic experiences.

1600

Jonathan's Law would make it possible for an employee whose child has died to take an unpaid leave of absence for up to 52 weeks, and it would allow parents to take time off to do what they need to do to heal, rebuild their lives and to care for their other children. Many families who experience the loss of a child have other

children at home, and they have to take the time to try to support those brothers and sisters who are also grieving. This bill would allow the time for them to do that. It would help them through that heart-wrenching journey of recovery that they are engaged in as they try to recover from the loss of the child.

It would also bring bereavement rights for parents of children who die in line with parents who have lost children because of specific circumstances. As the member for Toronto–Danforth pointed out, parents of children who die in an accident or due to illness have 10 days of leave under the Employment Standards Act, while parents of children who die as the result of a crime are entitled to unpaid leave for up to 104 weeks. Granting parents, as this bill does, 52 weeks of unpaid leave, while protecting their job, would recognize that the loss of a child is a tragedy regardless of the circumstances that led to that loss. In this way, Jonathan's Law addresses a gap that exists in current legislation that unfairly disadvantages Ontarians who are going through unbearable hardship.

I understand that there may be some concerns about the impact of this bill on workforces, but as the member across the way pointed out, ensuring that employees are able to return to work fully engaged and productive is a huge benefit to the economy and to workplaces across this province. So it is my hope that this bill will move through the process quickly and will become law in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: First let me thank the member from Toronto–Danforth for allowing us the privilege of debating this private member's bill today; it was through his efforts that it finds itself on the floor. And let me add my thanks and my sympathies to Jonathan's parents, who have joined us today. By honouring the memory of Jonathan in a way that's just going to help so many other people around the province of Ontario—they are to be commended for that, Speaker. I can't imagine how hard that is.

Speaker, when you become the Minister of Labour—perhaps there are other people around the room who have served as Minister of Labour—you often go into the role thinking that it's about rules, regulations, laws and acts—and it is; a lot of it has to do with that. But underpinning all those rules, regulations and amendments that we bring in is the interaction that we have between each other as humans. It happens to be rules that govern the workplace, but it really is something that tells us how we feel about each other, how we respect each other, how we understand each other and how we help ourselves through times when times can get pretty tough.

Often we think that sometimes we put an awful lot of emphasis on our jobs, and there are days when you wonder if you work to live or live to work. Often it should be a balance of those things, I think. I think that when the time comes, when we as individuals—as mothers or fathers, brothers and sisters—hit those really

tough times in our lives, when we hit those things that we didn't ever anticipate we'd ever have to deal with, that's when we need to ensure that we've got the right rules in effect, that we've done the right thing, that it's covered off, that you don't have to think about, "Do I have a job anymore? Do I have to go to work in a couple of days?", and that you can actually do the most important thing that anybody would be expected to do at that point in time.

I think that what we're talking about today, Speaker, is the period of grief that has to follow the demise, the death, of a child. I can't imagine what it's like. I haven't been through it. There are people in the room today who have, and I think they're giving us very, very good advice. As the Minister of Labour, I can tell the member from Toronto–Danforth that I'm listening, and I support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's our last debate before the break for the holidays, and it's a difficult topic that we're discussing today: Bill 31, Jonathan's Law. We're discussing giving parents leave without pay for up to 52 weeks if they lose a child.

I want to commend the member for Toronto–Danforth. Even though it's a difficult topic to bring forward at the end of the session, it's important. It's important to have a discussion about what it means to live in a civilized society where we support each other. We often hear the expression that it takes a village to raise a child; well, it also takes a village to support the family when a child has to be buried. It's difficult when you go to a cemetery and you see the tombstones for adults, but there is a section for children—a very tiny section, hopefully, in most cemeteries—and that's a real heart-breaker.

But it's not just the parents who deserve our support. Of course, we all want to offer our support to the parents, but also the extended family: the siblings, the grandparents. I think that very often there's much more that we can do in the school system, if a child loses a sibling, to educate our teachers, our principals and our other professionals on how to deal with it. I think too often people are sort of uncomfortable with a difficult topic, and so they just ignore it. That actually makes the situation a lot worse, as we know.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence brought forward last year a bill to help parents who lost a child to stillbirth or during the development process of the fetus. Again, why aren't those parents given the support they need? It's because people are uncomfortable. I think that it's time for us to address those difficult topics.

We all think about our own families and our own children. As a parent of four children who have made it to adulthood just this year—all four of them, and hopefully they will continue in that vein—we cannot imagine the difficulty that families experience, and we want to offer our support to Jonathan's parents, who are here today.

We were also talking recently about legislation to have four parents registered as the parents. Well, that also

brings into question—all four parents will need support from their employers. The workplace becomes a difficult place, and we have to show support for small businesses, but we have to first primarily put our support with the parents who are grieving, and with the other family members as well.

I didn't hear until I was in my late teens about my mother's brother, who was what they used to call a blue baby, which is that they're born with a hole in their heart. Today it's such a simple operation to fix for a baby, but my mother's brother lived only 16 days. I don't think my grandparents ever recovered from it—only 16 days, yet they bonded with the child—and the family didn't speak of it. I felt guilty that I didn't know about it. How would I have known about it? Nobody spoke about it.

But we do need to speak about these things, and that's what I really commend about Jonathan's Law. It's not just about addressing the fact that parents need support, but addressing the fact that as a society we need to speak about things openly, show our support for all the family members, friends and neighbours, and work together so that everybody gets the support they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I invite now our member from Toronto–Danforth for the final two-minute reply.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: First I have to thank all those who stood and addressed the bill today: the Minister without Portfolio responsible for seniors' affairs, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member for Oshawa, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the member from Nepean–Carleton, the member from London West, the Minister of Labour and the member from Thornhill.

I have to say, sometimes we have discussions in here that are not as illuminating as they might be, and sometimes we have discussions that are very heartfelt and cut to the centre of what it is to be a human. To all of you who rose today, spoke from the heart and spoke powerfully, I'm very much grateful. I'm very grateful to Vince and Espy for taking their difficulty and bringing forward something that will help parents who have faced similar situations in future. It's an extraordinary thing for people to do.

All of us here are subject to the same tragedies and joys as the rest of the population, and in that we're just normal people. But we do have one difference from many others, and that is that as a body we can actually change the laws of this province and make a difference in people's lives.

I'm very appreciative of the comments made by the Minister of Labour. He spoke about this bill in a moving and understanding way. It is my hope, if it isn't with this bill—as he would well know, I'm not stuck on whether a bill I put forward gets passed. But if he would take this content and make it real in law, he would make a difference in people's lives.

For all of you who stood up and spoke, and all who have contributed to making this society a better place,

and to those who have the ability to make it much better in the future, my thanks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the honourable member from Toronto–Danforth.

I respectfully advise my colleagues that the time provided for private members' public business has expired. We'll now consider the votes.

NANJING MASSACRE COMMEMORATIVE DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DU MASSACRE DE NANJING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): We will deal first with ballot item number 28, standing in the name of Ms. Wong.

Ms. Wong has moved second reading of Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Ms. Wong, I invite you to let us know to what committee you'd like to refer this bill.

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Standing Committee on Justice Policy? So referred. In favour? Carried.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

The Acting Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): We will now move to consider Mr. Brown's motion. Mr. Brown has moved private member's notice of motion number 38.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour? All those opposed? I heard some nays. We're not unanimous.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a vote taken at the end of private members' public business.

JONATHAN'S LAW (EMPLOYEE LEAVE OF ABSENCE WHEN CHILD DIES), 2016

LOI JONATHAN DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ DES EMPLOYÉS EN CAS DE DÉCÈS D'UN ENFANT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): We'll now move to consider Mr. Tabuns's bill. Mr. Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 31, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to entitle an employee whose child has died to a leave of absence.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Mr. Tabuns, I invite you to refer this bill to a particular committee.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I ask that the bill go to regulations and private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): To regulations and private bills. Do we agree? Agreed.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1613 to 1618.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I'd respectfully ask all honourable members to please take their seats. Please take your seats before we proceed to the vote. Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Brown has moved private member's notice of motion number 38. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine

French, Jennifer K.
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 30; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): With the conclusion of private members' public business, there are two announcements. The first is, I beg to inform the House that the following report was tabled: A report from the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning Madeleine Meilleur, Member for Ottawa–Vanier.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Announcement 2: I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members'

public business such that Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item number 33 and Mr. Wilson assumes ballot item number 61.

Orders of the day? The Honourable Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, I am very happy to move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Mr. Zimmer has moved adjournment of the House. All those

in favour? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Honourable colleagues, je voudrais vous souhaiter de bonnes vacances, un joyeux Noël et une bonne année 2017.

It's my privilege and honour to adjourn the 2016 sitting of the 41st Parliament. We shall see you on Tuesday, February 21, 9 a.m., in 2017.

The House adjourned at 1622.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care) / Ministre associée de l'Éducation (Petite enfance et Garde d'enfants)
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Arthur Potts, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Yvan Baker, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Jim McDonell, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
James J. Bradley, Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Wayne Gates, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qaadri, Laurie Scott
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
James J. Bradley, Steve Clark
Vic Dhillon, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Arthur Potts
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Ted McMeekin, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch